

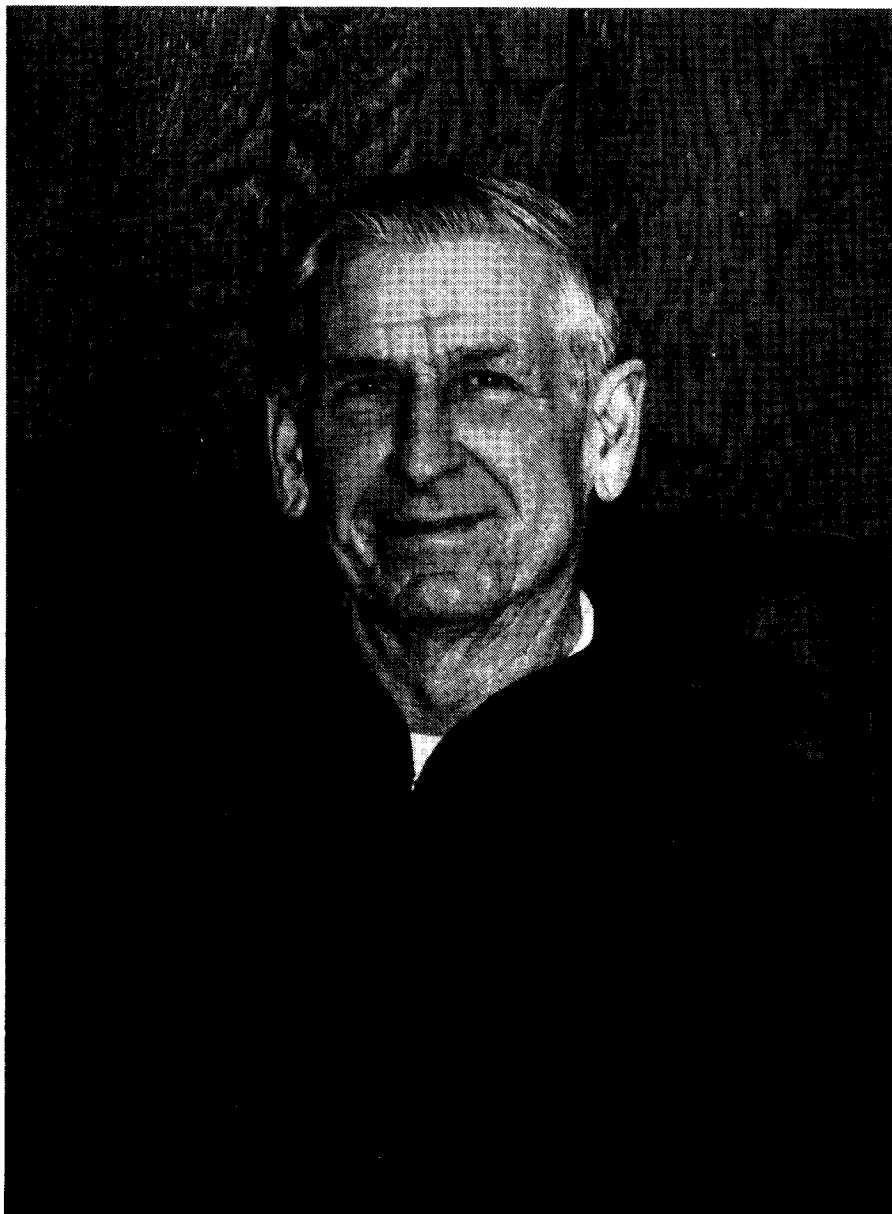
An Interview with
SOLAN TERRELL

An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken

Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada

Tonopah
1987

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Nye County Commissioners
Tonopah, Nevada
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Solan Terrell
1981

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PREFACE

The Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) engages in interviewing people who can provide firsthand descriptions of the individuals, events, and places that give history its substance. The products of this research are the tapes of the interviews and their transcriptions.

In themselves, oral history interviews are not history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiography as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the NCTHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, but it cannot attest that they are free of error. Accordingly, oral histories should be read with the same prudence that the reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information.

It is the policy of the NCTHP to produce transcripts that are as close to verbatim as possible, but some alteration of the text is generally both unavoidable and desirable. When human speech is captured in print the result can be a morass of tangled syntax, false starts, and incomplete sentences, sometimes verging on incoherency. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often largely unreadable and therefore a waste of the resources expended in their production. While keeping alterations to a minimum the NCTHP will,

in preparing a text:

- a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the uhs, ahs and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;
- b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;
- c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;
- d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and
- e. make every effort to correctly spell the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.

As project director, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those who participated in the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). It was an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to obtain oral histories from so many wonderful individuals. I was welcomed into many homes--in many cases as a stranger--and was allowed to share in the recollection of local history. In a number of cases I had the opportunity to interview Nye County residents whom I have known and admired since I was a teenager; these experiences were especially gratifying. I thank the residents throughout Nye County and southern Nevada--too numerous to mention by name--who provided assistance, information, and photographs. They helped make the successful completion of this project possible.

Appreciation goes to Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., Robert N. "Bobby" Revert, and Patricia S. Mankins, the Nye County commissioners who initiated this project. Mr. Garcia and Mr. Revert, in particular, showed deep interest and unyielding support for the project from its inception. Thanks also go to current commissioners Richard L. Carver and Barbara J. Raper, who have since joined Mr. Revert on the board and who have continued the project with enthusiastic support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave unwavering support and advocacy of the project within Nye County and before the State of Nevada Nuclear Waste Project Office and the United States Department of Energy; both entities provided funds for this project. Thanks are also extended to Mr. Bradhurst for his advice and input regarding the conduct of the research and for constantly serving as a sounding board when methodological problems were worked out. This project would never have

become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Bradhurst.

Jean Charney served as administrative assistant, editor, indexer, and typist throughout the project; her services have been indispensable. Louise Terrell provided considerable assistance in transcribing many of the oral histories; Barbara Douglass also transcribed a number of interviews. Transcribing, typing, editing, and indexing were provided at various times by Alice Levine, Jodie Hanson, Mike Green, and Cynthia Tremblay. Jared Charney contributed essential word processing skills. Maire Hayes, Michelle Starika, Anita Coryell, Michelle Welsh, Lindsay Schumacher, and Jodie Hanson shouldered the herculean task of proofreading the oral histories. Gretchen Loeffler and Bambi McCracken assisted in numerous secretarial and clerical duties. Phillip Earl of the Nevada Historical Society contributed valuable support and criticism throughout the project, and Tom King at the Oral History Program of the University of Nevada at Reno served as a consulting oral historian. Much deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

All material for the NCTHP was prepared with the support of the U.S. Department of Energy, Grant No. DE-FG08-89NV10820. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of DOE.

--Robert D. McCracken
Tonopah, Nevada
June 1990

INTRODUCTION

Historians generally consider the year 1890 as the end of the American frontier. By then, most of the western United States had been settled, ranches and farms developed, communities established, and roads and railroads constructed. The mining boomtowns, based on the lure of overnight riches from newly developed lodes, were but a memory.

Although Nevada was granted statehood in 1864, examination of any map of the state from the late 1800s shows that while much of the state was mapped and its geographical features named, a vast region--stretching from Belmont south to the Las Vegas meadows, comprising most of Nye County--remained largely unsettled and unmapped. In 1890 most of southcentral Nevada remained very much a frontier, and it continued to be for at least another twenty years.

The great mining booms at Tonopah (1900), Goldfield (1902), and Rhyolite (1904) represent the last major flowering of what might be called the Old West in the United States. Consequently, southcentral Nevada, notably Nye County, remains close to the American frontier; closer, perhaps, than any other region of the American West. In a real sense, a significant part of the frontier can still be found in southcentral Nevada. It exists in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents. The frontier-like character of the area also is visible in the relatively undisturbed quality of the natural environment, most of it essentially untouched by human hands.

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the boomtown period from 1900 to about 1915, but very little on the area after around 1920. The volume of available sources

varies from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Tonopah's first two decades of existence, and the town has had a newspaper continuously since its first year. In contrast, relatively little is known about the early days of Gabbs, Round Mountain, Manhattan, Beatty, Amargosa Valley, and Pahrump. Gabbs's only newspaper was published intermittently between 1974 and 1976. Round Mountain's only newspaper, the Round Mountain Nugget, was published between 1906 and 1910. Manhattan had newspaper coverage for most of the years between 1906 and 1922. Amargosa Valley has never had a newspaper; Beatty's independent paper folded in 1912. Pahrump's first newspaper did not appear until 1971. All six communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities after their own papers folded, although Beatty was served by the Beatty Bulletin, which was published as a supplement to the Goldfield News between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 is stored in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Nye County's close ties to our nation's frontier past, and recognizing that few written sources on local history are available, especially after about 1920, the Nye County Commissioners initiated the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). The NCTHP represents an effort to systematically collect and preserve information on the history of Nye County. The centerpiece of the NCTHP is a large set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Nye County libraries, Special Collections in the James R. Dickinson

Library at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada. The interviews vary in length and detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite picture of each community's life and development. The collection of interviews for each community can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is unique--some are large, others are small--yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a composite view of community and county history, revealing the flow of life and events for a part of Nevada that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians.

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history. These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Nye County residents. In all, more than 700 photos have been collected and carefully identified. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories.

On the basis of the oral interviews as well as existing written sources, histories have been prepared for the major communities in Nye County. These histories also have been archived.

The town history project is one component of a Nye County program to determine the socioeconomic impacts of a federal proposal to build and operate a nuclear waste repository in southcentral Nye County. The repository, which would be located inside a mountain (Yucca Mountain), would be the nation's first, and possibly only, permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. The Nye County Board of County Commissioners initiated the NCTHP in 1987 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions, and quality of life of Nye County

communities that may be impacted by a repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for hundreds, possibly thousands, of years to come, and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided near the site. In the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nye County, material compiled by the NCTHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

--R.D.M.

Robert McCracken interviewing Solan Terrell at his home in Tonopah, Nevada
October 16 and 19 and November 3, 4, and 22, 1987

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Solan, could you state your full name and your age and birthdate and birthplace.

ST: My name is Solan Chester Terrell. I was born July 13, 1916, in Montesano, Washington. My father's name was Clyde and my mother's name was Kittie.

RM: What was your mother's maiden name?

ST: Wheeler.

RM: Could you tell me a little bit about your father?

ST: I don't remember when he was born (I'm terrible about dates). He was born in Greenville, California, which is 70 or 80 miles northwest of Reno. His father worked in the forest. My father had an older sister named Hazel. My grandmother, his mother, died, and my father's father was killed in an accident out in the forest. My father always believed that somebody had killed him; he was never sure of that. When the father died, the townspeople of Greenville took up a collection. They got a fairly large sum of money for that time, and Aunt Hazel, his sister, went to stay with their paternal grandmother, who lived in Oakland. My father was sent to Tuscarora, Nevada, which is north of Elko, to stay with the grandmother on the other side of the family. He was about 7, I think, when this happened - 6 or 7. And he spent probably - oh, until he was about 17 or 18, I believe - in Tuscarora.

When he was in Tuscarora he went as far as the 5th grade in school. He quit school and went to work for a fellow who had, and published, the Tuscarora Times. His name was Pegleg Plunkett; he only had one leg. My father was raised in the mountains. He loved Nevada for the openness, and

he was very interested in mining, but of course he was a very young man. When Tonopah was discovered in 1902 (now, I might have the years mixed up, but . . .) he walked from Tuscarora to Tonopah in the wintertime. I believe he was 17. I wouldn't want to walk it today.

RM: Really.

ST: Terrible weather. And he always remembered that when he was walking down Smoky Valley he could see this big plume of steam which was Darrough's.

RM: Yes - the Darrough's Hot Springs.

ST: He never did forget that. But he came to Tonopah, and went to work on a water wagon that hauled water from Frazier's Wells to Tonopah. Frazier's is north of Tonopah about 9 miles. They had a spring out there. There was a building out there, and a fellow had more or less homesteaded there. So he went in the water business, and my dad drove this team in town with a water tank on back, and they sold it by the bucket around town.

He stayed less than a year, then he went back to Tuscarora. And Tuscarora had more or less fallen upon hard times, so about a year later - once again in the winter - he rode a horse named Black Bart down to Tonopah.

The boom had started in Beatty and Bullfrog, so he went down there and was working for the newspaper down there. He was about 20 or 21 by then. He'd already met my mother . . . I've forgotten the circumstances. He stayed in Beatty for awhile, and he would ride a bicycle from Beatty down to Petaluma, California.

RM: He rode a bicycle clear to there. Good lord!

ST: He certainly did. [chuckles] He said he pushed it more than he rode it. Anyway, he and my mother finally got married, and he brought her to Beatty. They were there for a couple of years and then the bottom fell out

of the boom down there, on account of the earthquake in San Francisco.

That's where all the money was coined, and everything dried up.

There was a family that lived in Beatty by the name of Reddenbaugh. And she gave birth to a baby girl - Muriel - the first white child born in Beatty. Then my mother gave birth to my sister Clydene, who was the second white child born there. This was around the time of the earthquake.

Then they went to California. My oldest brother, Donald, was born somewhere in the Bay Area. From California they moved to Monosano, Washington, and my father was working for a newspaper up there and he was trying to invent things. He invented a chicken brooder. He loved to make or invent things. My other brother, Starle, and I were born in Montesano. Then they moved down to Colusa, California - I think I was about a year old - and my father went to work for the Colusa Daily Sun.

RM: Now, where's Colusa?

ST: It's about 35 miles northwest of Marysville, out in the rice and prune area. We stayed there; my father bought a little piece of land and built a house. And in 1925, when the Gilbert boom was really going, he got all excited about mining once again, and decided to come back to Tonopah. So he and my brother Starle came to Tonopah. And my dad had a truck - it had hard rubber tires, I believe, and gas lamps - it was a Vim. I'll bet you never heard of it.

RM: No, I haven't.

ST: Oh, what a cantankerous old truck. Anyway, they came to Tonopah, and my dad worked for a stockbroker - a big, heavysset, florid guy. My dad went to work for him, selling stock. And the Gilbert was really hot; you could sell stock to all these idiots coming in town, and he made a little chunk of money.

After about a year, he came back down to Colusa, bought a 1925 Chevrolet touring car and loaded the whole family into it; all but my sister. She was living in Oakland, going to school. (My brother Starle stayed in Tonopah.) My mother, my dad, and my older brother Don, and I came to Tonopah. We went over to Bakersfield, up through that way. We came over Westgard Pass - in January! We got up to the top of Westgard Pass and it got dark. Of course, the old car didn't have a heater. It was a touring car, with side curtains on it. I don't think I was ever so cold in my life. Anyway, we stayed up on top of Westgard that night and I thought I was going to freeze. Oh, my Lord. Well, the next day - I don't know how we ever got down those terrible, narrow roads. My father was not what you'd call a superb driver.

We got into Tonopah fairly late in the afternoon, and he'd already bought a house in Tonopah. The woman next door on one side was named Nelson, and I think her husband had died. She had 2 daughters. And a fellow by the name of Al Silver and his wife lived on the other side. Al Silver was a mining man. We lived there for quite awhile, and that was my first appearance in Tonopah. The very next morning I got up, and I'd never seen a burro in my life. I got up and I was walking around, and there was this burro walking down the street. I think I was 9 years old, going on 10. I tried to catch this burro. And the burro ran down the street - down towards the high school, which is now Barsanti Park. And he went through this gate into a yard. Well, I was in the yard trying to get this burro out, and this kid came out, and he wanted to know what I was doing. I didn't know who he was, he didn't know who I was. [chuckles] And I said, "Well, I'm going to take this burro."

And he said, "You're not. This is my burro. That burro belongs to

me."

And I said, "I don't know you own this burro."

He said, "Well, I'm telling you I own the burro."

That was the first boy I met in Tonopah. His name was Jimmie Donahue. [sounds like Dun-a-who] His house is still standing down there where Al Vilcheck lives.

Lloyd Eason was the next boy I met.

RM: Well, can we back up a here? Tell me a little bit about your mother.

ST: Well, it's strange. I really don't know too much about my mother.

Her father was a carpenter - a cabinet maker. Her parents lived in Petaluma, California. My grandfather died; I never did know him. But her mother used to come to Colusa and visit with us. I remember helping her make decorations for the Christmas trees - stringing cranberries and . . . She loved to make patchwork quilts, and she always had me hold my finger on when she tied the knots. I think she died when I about 6, so my memory of my mother's family is pretty faint.

My mother was born in Polermo, California. I took her and my father down one time - she wanted to go down to this town. And it was such a disappointment to her, because she'd left there when she was a girl - she hadn't been back in 50 years, I guess. I took my father to Greenville one time; the same thing. Everybody he'd known except one person had gone or died, and he was so despondent for a couple of days. It pays not to go back when you leave when you're young.

RM: Yes; it's not the same when you go back. Did you start school here, then?

ST: I started in - I think it was the 4th grade. Ethel Robb was the first teacher I had. She eventually married Tom McCullough, who was the Justice

of the Peace here for years and years. And then I went to work . . .

I should go back a little bit. My father was buying some gold claims out at Eden Creek, and he was trying to promote them, mainly through writing letters - you know, mailing letters to people. I don't know where he got the lists - maybe through his association with this stockbroker - and I used to help him run the job press; I'd feed it. I had to stand on a box, almost, to do it. That was my first introduction into working in newspapers.

Then I'd sell papers on the side and . . . There were different ways kids could make money. We'd scout around and find whiskey bottles and sell them to the bootleggers. There were about 6 or 8 bootleggers in town who'd buy all the bottles you could get. Jimmie Donahue and I were partners in this business, because he knew all the Irish guys in town. We'd go around to their houses about every month or so and collect the bottles that they had bought. We got 10 cents, I think, for a pint bottle. And for a quart bottle I think we got 15. We'd get a gunny sack and go around and collect these bottles and sell them. Then you could sell cardboard boxes to the bakery - 5 cents for a small one and 10 cents for a bigger one. Because they were packing and shipping bread around the country.

RM: They were making bread at the bakery.

ST: Oh, yes. Fine French bread. And then, you could always sell gunny sacks to the water company. They would use them around the meters in the winter time. You could sell scrap lumber. Old man Donahue had 2 trucks. One was a Federal, and one was a Republic; they had hard rubber tires on them. I was probably 10, 11, maybe 12, and Jimmie and I would get one of his old trucks and we'd get it started and we'd go out to Divide. We'd start tearing down sheds and we'd bring in a load of old boards, and we'd

sell them to people for \$5 a load. That was a lot of money.

RM: What did your father do for a living at that time?

ST: There were 2 newspapers in town: the Tonopah Bonanza and the Tonopah Times. I think he worked at the Tonopah Times for Frank Garside. In fact, Frank Garside bought a newspaper in Vegas. He owned the Review Journal. He bought it in '31, I think, and moved to Vegas with his family, and he was appointed postmaster - he was postmaster in Las Vegas for years and years. Frank was a very, very fine man. And my dad worked for him in between mining deals. Mining deals never paid off very well.

RM: So he was still interested in mining.

ST: Oh, yes, you bet. That was the love of his life, and he was the most - what's a good word to describe him - ineffectual miner, I would say, in the world. A lot of heart, and a lot of get-up-and-go, but he didn't know anything about mining; didn't know anything.

RM: Tell me some more about what it was like to be a kid in the '20s in Tonopah.

ST: Well, I've discussed this with some of the old-timers that are still left. During the present age there's so much notoriety and so much writing about people discriminating against people. When we were kids, there was no such thing. I went to school with Indians, Mexicans, Serbians, Finlanders, Irish, Cousin Jack - you name it. And we were all just poor as church mice; everybody was poor. And I didn't look down upon somebody because he was an Indian or a Serbian or . . . We called the Serbians bohunks and we called the Finlanders Finns, but it was a friendly relationship. I'm of English descent, and once in awhile they'd call me a Limey, or something. But we were all good friends; the ones who are still alive are still good friends. Nowadays everybody is up in arms because

they're being discriminated against. If they were all poor at the same time, I don't think they'd have that problem.

RM: Did each ethnic group have its own part of town?

ST: No, they were . . . the Serbians, for awhile, had places up in Water Street; and so did the Mexicans. And there was a little Indian camp north of the foundry, up in there. And most of the Finlanders were single, and they had 2 Finnish boarding houses in town. And there were a couple of boarding houses for the Cousin Jacks. But they associated together as friends. They all worked in the mines, and there was never any of this: "You're a . . . you're a bohunk," or "you're a wop," or "you're an Indian," or "a Mexican." Everybody was alike, and never did think about a person being a different nationality. Maybe if I'd have had \$10,000 I might have thought about it, but I didn't have \$10,000. [chuckles] I was lucky I had cardboard in my shoes!

RM: Do you think that was true of the adults, too?

ST: Yes. You had to work together in the mines and the mills. And you couldn't work with somebody you didn't like.

RM: Yes, you'd get hurt.

ST: If you hated him, or he hated you, down there . . . They were all good friends. They more or less socialized separately, you know. The Mexican families would go with the Mexican families, but . . . Gee, some of the finest people in the world were born and raised in Tonopah. Of all nationalities.

RM: Were there Italians?

ST: Yes. I think for awhile the greatest collection were Cousin Jacks. And there were a few Finlanders, quite a few Serbians, and a lot of Mexicans. When you get thinking about it, they were pretty well all

balanced out.

RM: Could you say some more about what it was like to be a kid in the '20s?

ST: We had a lot of fun. Our great pastime was riding burros.

RM: Were there burros running loose all over town?

ST: Yes, but they were all owned by kids. Jimmie Donahue's burro was called Goldfield Babe. As mean and cantankerous an animal as was ever born was a burro. If they couldn't bite you, they'd kick. If they couldn't do that, they'd roll on you.

RM: [laughs] Well, did the owner feed them, or . . .?

ST: Garbage cans.

RM: They just kind of - scavenged.

ST: Yes. Down at the dump. Yes; they scavenged. You know, a burro is like a coyote. He can live anywhere; he can survive anywhere. Where any other animal would starve to death in 30 days, a burro'll get fat.

[laughter] A coyote's the same way. They're natural for the desert; they really work.

I would safely say there were 40 or 50 burros running loose in Tonopah. And they were always having colts. Goldfield had the same thing. The kids in Goldfield would come to Tonopah at night and steal the Tonopah burros and ride them back to Goldfield. The Tonopah kids would go over there and steal them and bring them back. The kids in Goldfield and Tonopah were almost mortal enemies. If you went to Goldfield, you went with a group. And you didn't slow down - you just kept moving as you went.

RM: Otherwise, you'd get in a fight?

ST: Oh, yes. The jealousy of the towns was interesting.

RM: What was school like?

ST: School was very strict. In fact, I think the greatest mistake the country's ever made was to allow all these different things in the schools. When we went to school you were taught certain subjects for 8 years. Your basic subjects that you need to survive: reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, history, and geography. You had that year after year after year. And maybe you weren't the best speller, or the best adder, or the best historian, or anything, but you knew it. And when you went into high school, then you stepped up to different things. Nowadays, kids are taking art when they're in the 3rd and 4th grades - can't read or write.

But I always wanted to work because I like money. Money buys things. My brother, Starle, was working for the Western Union. They had an office downtown, just down below where the Mizpah is now. He wanted to go up to Salt Lake to the Citizens' Military Training Camp. They took young kids from about 15 or 16 on up, and it was like a boot camp - in the army. So he went up there, and I took his job for him while he was gone. This was in the summer.

RM: About what year would that have been?

ST: It'd be when I was in - maybe in the 7th or 8th grade. I should digress back before that.

The first job I had in Tonopah that was on a weekly wage was at the Mizpah Hotel for Rube Kelly, the man who owned it. He was a machinist. In fact, he was partners at Campbell and Kelly at the foundry. Down in the basement of the hotel they had a laundry for the rooming houses and the boarding houses and the restaurants and so forth. They would wash tablecloths, sheets - all that stuff. He had 4 or 5 young women working down there for him, and he had to have somebody to pick up and deliver these things. So I got that job, and it paid \$5 a week. It took me about

2 hours a day to do it.

RM: Did you have a delivery wagon?

ST: No, I had to pack the darn fool things. Some were heavy. And there were about 5 or 6, 7 cafes in town, and quite a few rooming houses, and a few private individuals whose laundry he'd do. There was quite a tour, walking up these hills carrying these big bundles. I worked there for quite awhile . . .

CHAPTER TWO

ST: Anyway, I had that job carrying that laundry, and the Weepah boom came on, and to me it was the most amazing spectacle of my life.

RM: Yes. Now, where is Weepah? For the record?

ST: It was between here and Silver Peak, which would be kind of southwest - mainly west, on the other side of Lone Mountain. People came in here - they walked in, they rode horses in, they came on the train, they came on stages - the town was absolutely jam-packed with people. And the Mizpah Hotel was jam-packed. Rube Kelly had a big, heavy-set old man who was the desk clerk, and the elevator was self-operated - you'd push the lever one way to go up, and one way to go down. He talked to me one day; he wanted to hire me to run his elevator. And gosh, I was only about 10. I had the other job, but he was going to pay \$10 a week . . . that was \$15 a week I'd be making. So I said, "Oh, I'll be glad to do it." I'd leave school, hustle down, deliver the laundry, pick it up, then I'd come home and eat, change, go down and run the elevator for 3 hours. It got to be that I was running myself to death with the laundry.

So I decided to buy a car. There was an old fellow - an old Irishman -

diagonally south of the courthouse, about 3 streets back. He had a Model T pickup in the backyard that was up on blocks. Jimmie Donahue knew the old guy, and he said, "Well, let's go up and talk to him." So we went to his door, and the old guy's wondering what we wanted. (We were always asking for whiskey bottles.)

And he said, "What do you guys want?"

I said, "Like to sell that old Model T out there?"

"I don't know," he said. "I've had that a long time. I don't know. How much you give me for it?"

I said, "Well, I don't know. How much you want for it?" I was dickering even then.

He said, "Would you give me \$5 for it?"

I said, "Yes, I'll give you \$5."

He said, "You got the money on you?"

I said, "Yeah, I got it." So I dug out \$5. (I went prepared, in case he wanted to sell it.) Well, the old Model T didn't have a radiator. It didn't have tires on it. I got it up to my house somehow - I think my dad towed it up, or something. And there I am with a pickup; no tires, no radiator. So Donahue and I . . . do you know the Ford garage right back of where Dr. Dees has that building down there where Coleman's is?

RM: Yes.

ST: Well, they had a warehouse out in back - the one that the mortuary uses now. And they had all this stuff in there - old parts and things. So one night Jimmie and I went down there. We crawled in through the holes in the galvanized iron, and we got 4 tires, 4 tubes, and a radiator. We got the tires on it. They weren't very good, but they were better than the ones that were on it! We put the radiator on it, but the engine wouldn't

turn over. So I said, "Oh, Lord." I took the head off, and water had run down the sparkplugs, and it had rusted the rings to the cylinder walls. And I thought, "Oh, I'll never get this thing running." So I made a round block of wood that fit right down in the cylinder. I would whack it with the singlejack on top of the piston. And that didn't work, so I filled them all with 1/2 inch of oil, and I let it sit there, and every time I'd go by I'd put that block in there to whack it 3 or 4 times. I finally broke them loose. God knows what kind of shape the rings were in - the cylinder wall. I put the head back on it, and got it running. So that was my laundry truck. I'd deliver laundry real fast, and I had a little bit of spare time before I went to work. The Weepah boom lasted . . . about 2 months, I guess he kept me on the elevator.

And I'll never forget a promoter in there by the name of Volmer. He was very famous, out at Silver Peak. Old Fred Volmer would come to town a lot, because he was promoting stock; he'd been making himself some money. And I went up there one day. The deskman said, "Terrell, come over here. You've got to take this up to Fred Volmer in Room 212."

He had a suit that had been pressed, and a nice white shirt that had been ironed and everything. So he told me what room, and I went up on the elevator and went down to the door and knocked on the door and old Fred said, "Come on in."

I went in. I said, "Mr. Volmer, here's the suit and shirt."

"Oh, fine; fine. Thank you, boy." And he had a big pile of change on the dresser. He just reached over and got a handful of it and said, "Here's a tip for you." I had both my hands out; he had a big hand. He gave me almost a \$5 tip - quarters, dimes, nickels. No pennies in those days. I thought that was the brightest man ever born.

RM: People didn't use pennies in those days?

ST: Oh, no; we never saw pennies. What was there to use them for? There were no taxes . . .

I thought Volmer was the greatest man in the world, up till the day he died; I really did. That was pretty impressive to a kid, to get about a \$5 tip.

RM: Well, what were you doing with all this money?

ST: I was putting it in the postal savings. When I graduated out of high school, I had almost \$200 in it. I spent a little bit, too, you know, going to the movies. I had money to go to the movies - 15 cents for a movie, and when you went you'd want to buy candy.

Well, anyway, after that I went to work down at the Times running a job press.

RM: Again, this is after school and summers.

ST: Yes, after school. I went to work for Frank Garside feeding job press. I'd get 25 cents an hour for that, which wasn't much, but it kept change in my pocket.

RM: Yes, it kept you in movie money.

ST: Yes, it really did. We'd try and sneak in the movies to avoid paying the 15 cents.

RM: Yes. That was the old Butler's Theater, wasn't it?

ST: The old Butler. There was one down the street, but it was closed - the Liberty Theater.

RM: Where was it located?

ST: Down there just about where Giggie Springs is now.

RM: Was it closed when you came to town?

ST: Yes. There was hardly enough to support the one, I think.

RM: Was there a lot of mining activity in the '20s?

ST: Every mine in Tonopah of any consequence was working. Whether it was producing or not, they were working.

RM: Could you run through the mines, and tell me a little bit about them?

ST: I'm trying to think. There was the Extension, which was the big one down below town. They had an electric trolley from the mine up to the Extension mill. It was a big mill sitting right down there across from that gas station; I don't know what street it is. Then there was a mill behind it called the West End mill. The West End mine was just on the other side of the mill. The North Star up on the hill - the big one up on the big dump . . .

RM: The big one up on the hill where the dumps that are level up there?

ST: Yes. That was working. Down below it was the Montana. It had a big mill. There was a mill down by the foundry we called the . . . I can't remember the name of that, but there was a mill down there.

RM: There were mills all over, weren't there?

ST: A huge mill down at Millers that the ore was going to by rail from the Mizpah.

RM: Now, where's the Mizpah mine?

ST: That's that steel head frame up there. The Belmont, on the other side of the hill, on the north - on the east side of that mountain - they had a huge mill out there.

RM: Yes. That's the one across from the Buckeye.

ST: Yes. The one over by where Fred Ketten has his lumber yard - that was the (oh, I can't remember the name of that). And the Buckeye was working. And the Rescue-Eulah was working.

RM: Where was that?

ST: That's that big dump right alongside the highway just before you get up to the summit. An old fellow named Frank Rapp promoted that.

RM: What about the mine where the Silver Queen Motel is . . . that dump that's . . .

ST: Oh, that was the Jim Butler.

RM: Was that Jim Butler's original mine?

ST: No. That was the Mizpah. But it was named after Jim Butler.

RM: And the Mizpah mine is located behind . . .

ST: Behind the water company. That was the big producer. That's the one where the veins came to the surface.

RM: And that's where they made the original discovery.

ST: Then that one . . . with the little head frame was the Silver Top. There must've been at least a dozen mines working double. They were all working. A lot of them weren't producing, though.

RM: Were they exploration, or promotion, or what?

ST: Stocks. Stock promotion. There were 3 or 4 down by the cemetery. The Extension mine was just a stock promotion.

RM: Did these mines ever produce, or were they just stock promotion from day one?

ST: The Extension - today it'd probably be one God-awful silver mine.

RM: Why isn't it working?

ST: Well, they hit their first ore on the Extension (I could be wrong) around 1600, 1700 feet. Big, flat veins - good ore. And when the mine closed down in 1930 or '31 there were still big flat veins of good ore down there, but the Extension had a terrible water problem - they had a hard time keeping the water down so they could work the mine. They had big Cornish pumps - the big piston pumps - and they had to lower those down to

the water level, and they'd pump the water out. That's the reason they had the swimming pool down there, originally - because of the warm water coming out of the mine.

RM: It was warm water?

ST: It was hot water. It created a lot of trouble with the miners, because they'd get boils, like. The water was real hot. You could put your hand in it, but it was very uncomfortable. And they hit spots down there where they had bulkheaded the drift off completely, to keep the water from coming into the shaft, they had so much water.

RM: You say they didn't hit ore until 1500?

ST: 1500, 1600.

RM: How would they sink that deep, Solan?

ST: Selling stock. But once they hit the ore . . .

RM: Did they think they had ore there, or was it just a flyer?

ST: A flyer, because . . . actually, a little bit west of the Mizpah very few of the mines produced.

RM: Oh, west of the Mizpah there wasn't much ore?

ST: Yes. There was hardly any ore south of Main Street. A fault goes almost up alongside of the main street - a big fault that cut the ore bodies off. Now, the Rescue-Eulah up there was a stock promotion. This old guy, Frank Rapp, was a mining engineer. He studied it - the geological maps they had at time with the mines and that, and he figured that these veins were cut off. And no one could swear if it was post-mineral or pre-mineral. He figured they were post-mineral, and other segments would be on the other side of that fault. In fact, if you go back and read the old papers, about every month or so he predicted he was going to . . . he'd find little bits of ore and little seams and that. He was going to find

the big bonanza, but never did. The Buckeye didn't produce hardly anything, either. Just little stringers and . . .

RM: That's a deep shaft up there by the Buckeye, isn't it?

ST: Very deep, yes. Letson Baliette was the one who promoted that.

RM: Did they hit water up there?

ST: No. The Belmont had a little bit of water in the bottom of it; that's all. The Extension was the one . . .

RM: The water was down below the Extension?

ST: Yes.

RM: If you went on down from the Extension would the water be down there, too?

ST: Oh, I think so.

RM: What did the ore look like? And, was it in veins, or . . .?

ST: In veins. When a vein occurs - when the earth moves - it's like it has 2 walls on it. And every time the earth would move, the more the solution would come out. The Tonopah ore was in white quartz, and the predominant silver was silver sulfide, which is black. There were a lot of cases where they would find ruby silver and horn silver. Horn silver is green; ruby silver is red. And in a couple of them - I think the Belmont and the Mizpah - they had places where they had a lot of both, along with the silver sulfide. And the only way they could treat the Tonopah ores was with cyanide. The cyanide dissolved the silver, and they could reconvert that back into silver through using zinc. You run the solutions over zinc, and it sticks to the zinc. Then they had to smelt it and separate it, too.

RM: So in all these mills they milled it down and then cyanided it?

ST: Oh, yes. Huge wood tanks. Old stamp mills; they were all big stamp . . . batteries of 5 - there'd be 5 stamps to a battery. I think the

Extension, the one of Millers and the Belmont were about the same size. They were huge. And when they were running, the town more or less vibrated.

RM: Yes, I think I read that one Millers mill had 100 stamps.

ST: I think it did. It was a huge amount.

RM: How did they power the stamps?

ST: Well, I would say originally by steam. Then when power came in, they went to electricity. It was a hell of a lot cheaper to use electricity than to go out and buy wood and coal and stoke a big old steam boiler - big belts, and everything.

RM: What was the range of veins in terms of width?

ST: From the thickness of a cigarette paper to 12, 14, 20 feet wide. That big hole up there on the hill - that big cave-in - was one big stope at one time.

RM: You mean, not too far from where Don Potts lives?

ST: Yes. That was a big stope of square sets. I think it went down to - if my memory's correct - about 400 feet. There were railroad tracks that ran over it. Back for years there the 2 engines were running there, and one day it gave away. Luckily, between shifts. In fact, a local fellow by the name of John Bombassei - he was an oddball, because he was from Switzerland [chuckles]; Swiss-Italian - he used to go down and crawl back in that big cave-in and pick up . . . hand sort ore. The only guy in town that would do it was old John.

RM: Because it was so dangerous.

ST: Oh - you couldn't get a rat to go back. [laughter] Old John did it. He made some pretty good shipments out of there.

RM: Yes. Well, what did the typical vein run during this period?

ST: I think the average millhead of Tonopah, where all the ore was processed, in the Tonopah mills, and the tons of ore and the amount of bullion they got . . . I think the average amount was around \$16, \$17. I read that somewhere.

RM: And what was silver?

ST: Silver was \$1. I think it got up around somewhere between \$1 and \$1.20 for awhile, but when we came to Tonopah, I think it was about 90 cents.

RM: So it was running 20 ounces or in that range.

ST: And a little bit of gold; the gold helped. The ratio in Tonopah, I think, was about 20 ounces of silver to an ounce of gold. Of course, when the stock market crashed, everything went down. Silver went down to 25 cents almost overnight. The mines started closing down one right after another. The last one that closed was the Mizpah. The Extension, and the Belmont, lasted a long time. I think the Belmont closed and the Extension closed, then the Mizpah finally closed. The Mizpah wasn't as deep as you'd . . . the Belmont was pretty deep.

RM: How deep was the Belmont?

ST: Well, I worked up there one day - that was enough for me. For Tony Perchetti - he was working on the 1100. And you could bake bread . . .

RM: It was so hot . . .

ST: I swear, you could bake bread back there; yes. You'd sit down there and the sweat would just run off you. One day - that was enough. I got paid \$6, which was a lot of money. But it wasn't worth . . . and I got out, quick.

RM: During this period when you were a kid here - let's say before 1930 - how many men would you estimate would be employed at a typical mine here?

ST: They worked 3 shifts.

RM: In the '20s they were working 3 shifts!

ST: Oh, yes. They had to keep those mills going. You couldn't shut a cyanide mill down. Those big tanks had to be stirring all the time. In the first house that we lived in, the miners who worked the Belmont would come over the hill and they'd walk down where all those houses are up there now. The fork in the road went down through there. There was a road that used to go up there and go over the hill and down to the mine, because they had an office right up there in that little pass; they had a 2 or 3-story building up there. And they'd blow the whistles . . . The Mizpah had a whistle, and they'd blow it at the change of shift. You'd look out and you could see the guys going up and pretty soon you could see the guys coming down. There must have been 500 or 600 men working up in the mines, at least. Then down at the Extension they had a little community; there must have been 30, 40 houses - 50 houses down there. No one had cars - they all had to walk - so they built a little town there, kind of a company town. But the rest of them walked over the hill to . . . the Mizpah, of course, was close. The ones that worked up at the North Star . . . I wouldn't try to walk up there every day. [laughter] That was a pretty deep shaft, too.

RM: What was life like for your mother during this period? What kind of a life did she lead?

ST: Well, like everybody else, pinching pennies, mainly. Because the pay wasn't good. Of course, living was cheap. When I go out to a restaurant and take out 3 or 4 or 5 people in Reno it costs me \$70, \$80, \$90 - I almost die. You could get a fine meal in those restaurants. For 75 cents you'd get a T-bone steak. The first haircut I got in Tonopah was 15 cents. Breakfast was a bowl of mush, a stack of hotcakes - that

was 15 cents, and coffee. Even though you were - say you were bringing in \$5 a day - you still had to buy wood or coal - there was no such thing as heat with electricity or gas. A lot of people rented, but if you had a house . . .

RM: Did many people own homes, do you think?

ST: A good share of them did, yes. Except for the single guys, and they would stay in the boarding houses.

RM: And there were a pretty large number of boarding houses, weren't there?

ST: Oh, yes; they were all over town. I don't know what they charged for boarding houses. It couldn't have been much - \$30 a month, maybe.

Because I went to work down at Millers after I got out of high school, working for Mrs. Trueba. They were rebuilding that mill down there. Mark Bradshaw and Al Silvers promoted it - rebuilt that big mill. I got paid \$60 a month, and the people working on the building were probably making \$5, \$6 a day. I think they paid \$60 a month for board and room. All you could eat, and good food. The Cousin Jack ladies who ran boarding houses . . .

RM: Oh, they tended to run the boarding houses?

ST: Yes. Some of them did. And they'd make pasties - that's where I ate my first pastie, from a woman by the name of Mrs. Prescott. Her house is still standing over there. She'd feed these guys dinner only.

RM: What's a pastie?

ST: Well, it's a Cornish pie. You take a round piece of pie dough, you roll it out, then you put in chunks of potato, chunks of beef, and onions. When I first made them, I didn't know how to do it. I finally learned a handful of each was a good mix. Then you mix them up, and you fold it

over, and you crimp the edges, and you bake them. Haven't you ever eaten a pastie?

RM: I never have.

ST: These are big - you can pick them up. I think they're better cold than they are hot.

RM: It sounds great.

ST: You've missed a part of heaven. I love them!

RM: Well, we've worked up to about 1930 or so. Let's see, when did you graduate from high school?

ST: 1934. The first job I had out of high school . . . I was still working out at the paper then, and they were building that mill down at Millers.

Mrs. Trueba needed a waiter, I guess. Dishwasher, everything else. So she hired me - I went down there. She paid me \$60 a month and my board and room. I worked down there for 2 months and then the mill was completed and they laid off most of the crew, so she didn't need anybody then.

Then I went back to work at the paper again, running the job press. I was walking up the street one day and I bumped into Jim Perkins, and they were building the mill out at Weepah. I knew Jim through his boy, and he knew my father. He said, "What are you doing?"

I said, "Nothing - looking for work."

He said, "Do you want to go to work?"

And I said, "Yes."

He said, "I need 2 guys going out to Weepah to help clean out ditches and that. Can you get a friend?"

There was a kid here in town named Clinton Stevenson, and he was

looking for work. I said, "I'll get somebody and we'll be out."

So he said, "Well, you meet me tomorrow morning," or whatever it was, "down here and I'll take you out."

So I got hold of Clinton and he jumped at it. We went out to Weepah and we made \$4.50 a day - paid \$1.50 for board and room. The room was horrible - just an old shack with no windows in it. The food was what was good. But we were cleaning these ditches out by hand. They were laying a pipeline down to the well north of Weepah in the valley.

RM: Was there a community out there then?

ST: No, but there were still a few of the old buildings left. Those were where we slept. [chuckles] They built a mess hall, and they were building this mill, and everything.

RM: Was it a promo deal?

ST: Oh, no. They ran up until around 1940 - late '40. Then they moved the whole mill to Northumberland.

RM: So they had ore out there.

ST: Oh, yes. It produced quite a bit of gold. And then they just moved the mill up to Northumberland - the whole mill. They tore it down, moved it up there and rebuilt it. And Northumberland ran for quite a long time. Old Jim Perkins was a cagy old guy. He wasn't a promoter, he was just working for the company. He was a mining engineer. That was one of my first terrible experiences of working, was working out at Weepah. I had so many blisters and . . .

RM: How many hours a day was that?

ST: Eight hours, 6 days a week. And you needed Sunday to rest. Almost every day I used to tell Clinton, "I'm going to quit tonight. This is killing me." It was. My hands were solid blisters. And I'd sleep that

night, and I would say, "Let's try it again." We lasted until we got all the ditches cleaned up, and everything. Built a reservoir up on the hill - they blasted it out - and they hauled up a bunch of bentonite, and spread it around to fill the cracks, then they had to lay us off.

Old Perkins really hated to lay us off. He said, "You kids sure work."

I was glad to . . . [laughter] Oh. Terrible hard work.

CHAPTER THREE

RM: Solan, I was just saying, as we left off the last tape, that you had graduated from high school in 1934, and had taken a good, hard-labor job out in Weepah. What did you do after that?

ST: Well, I've been thinking about that part. Before I went to Weepah, I went to work for Mrs. Trueba at Millers, where they were rebuilding the old mill. It was originally an old stamp mill, but they modernized it - put in big ball mills and brand new cyanide tanks. I was hired as a combination dishwasher, potato peeler, waiting on tables, and keeping the mess hall clean. At that time, she had a cook and had me as a dishwasher, and was probably feeding between 30 and 40 men.

RM: Were they working on the mill?

ST: Yes. Also there was a 2-story building that had been a boarding house years before. She had rooms and there were also some small houses that had belonged to the original mining company which had been cleaned up; the men stayed there. I lasted until the job was completed, which was about 2 months. I had been staying down there 7 days a week because I was getting board and room and \$60 per month. Then I came back to Tonopah and went to

work at the Times again, on the job press. And that's when I met Perkins and went to Weepah.

RM: Was the job press just for small printing jobs?

ST: Yes; flyers and letterhead; things like that.

RM: Was your father still working there then?

ST: No, I think he had gone mining out at Eden Creek. There was Tom Griffin, and I think my father would fill in occasionally. He also would do some writing for the paper and worked on the linotype.

RM: This is a good time to back up and talk about the whole Eden Creek acquisition, and how your father got the mine and what it meant to you and the family - because it's still in the family, isn't it?

ST: Well, it's been sold, such as the deal is. Eden Creek is east of Tonopah. You go out to Warm Springs, turn down the Reveille Valley to the Eden Creek Canyon where the old Fallini Ranch was, beyond the Reveille Mill, and go up the canyon about 4 miles. The mine that my dad originally bought was owned by a fellow named Frank McMullen. I believe he bought it in 1930 or '31.

RM: When do you think McMullen acquired it?

ST: I would say 10 or 15 years prior to that. There was a little bit of excitement lower down at the Bradshaw property, which was a discovery of silver. The reason it was called Bradshaw was because Mark Bradshaw promoted it. They drove a very long tunnel on the north side of the mountain through to the other side. He never did go completely through, and he didn't find any ore bodies.

RM: What made him drive the tunnel?

ST: The other side is where they found the silver. There was a small outcrop and it was very rich - I would say about \$50 or \$60. It was a

narrow vein, very narrow. I would say up on the surface, where my brother and another fellow leased later on, it was about 8 to 12 inches wide and it was harder than flint. They did produce one small shipment. The rock was just too hard to mine by hand, and Bradshaw either ran out of money or figured the vein didn't come down that far.

RM: They tried to cut it from below.

ST: The Eden Creek side was more accessible than the other side. Eden Creek is fairly deep, and the other side goes uphill, up where the outcrop was; they would have had to sink on it. If he had cut it from the other side, he would have had some backs. He still would have had to sink eventually, but it didn't pan out. They had quite a camp there. When we first went out there, there were 5 cabins that the company had built, and they had a boarding house, and the mine was up on the side of the hill.

RM: This is the Bradshaw mine?

ST: Yes. It belongs to Joe Fallini now; they've owned it for years.

RM: When did they make the initial discovery of the Eden Creek mine that your father acquired?

ST: I don't know. I would say 1920 or something like that, and I don't know who found it - whether [it was] Frank or [someone else].

RM: Was it gold?

ST: Both the original mine that my father bought and the next hill up was what we called the Crucible Mine. It belonged to a fellow by the name of Tom Bannigan. He was an old-time miner and kind of a promoter. It's about halfway up, but it's pretty high and the winters are very bad.

My father had dreams, as all people do who are involved in mining, that he was going to make a lot of money. At one time he had a chance to sell it to the Homestake people, but my dad was in love with it. If my

memory is correct, they made him an offer of maybe \$25,000 cash, plus another amount of money in stock in the Homestake Mining Company.

RM: This would have been in the '30s?

ST: Yes, and the Homestake stock was low, and \$25,000 then was a fairly large sum of money and of course the stock since 1930 has increased in value just a few percent.

RM: Yes, just a little. Could you say a few words about what the ore body looked like there?

ST: Well, the main vein, which we called the South Gold vein, more or less runs east and west. It's fairly large up on the surface. It's low grade ore; it might run \$7 or \$8 per ton, maybe more than that now. It's been so many years.

RM: You mean at prices then? It would run about 20/100th?

ST: I would say that. And it dips to the north and the strike of it is more or less east and west. But on the west side of the mountain there were some hot spots in the vein, because the overburden from the top of the hill almost to the bottom panned gold. Some of it is fairly coarse.

That's what my father wanted to work first - the placer. You cannot work placer by hand and make money unless it's high-grade - it's a losing proposition. Water was seasonal - you might have some up until July, then after that you didn't have any, so that was the end of your placering.

There is a spring up farther in the canyon that separates the Crucible and the South Gold hills, but maybe you could impound enough water to run 3 or 4 hours, and the sluice box is a very inefficient way to recover gold because you can't handle tonnage. So it was a losing proposition from the start; we never did make any money.

RM: Did you spend quite a bit of time out there during the '30s?

ST: Yes, off and on. Then we formed a company called the South Gold Mining Company, and he sold stock and somehow contacted some people in Philadelphia and they came out - Balthazar and another fellow, Bill Beatty, who was in the business of making the patterns for the looms to produce a cloth. He raised quite a bit of money and built that mill, which is still standing. It was not a large mill; it was a Wheeler Ball Mill and it was rated at 25 tons in 24 hours. We hoped to recover the gold through an impact amalgamator, plus a Diester concentrating table.

RM: Could you explain what an impact amalgamator does?

ST: Well, amalgamation plates are usually flat, and the pulp flows over them and the free gold will stick to the quick silver that is on the plates. These plates were vertical and this thing moved back and forth like a swing. The idea was that with the smaller amount of plates, you could run more pulp through. It was very impractical.

We also had a jig. The principle of a jig is that you [have essentially] a pulsating pump underneath, and on top you have a screen you call the bed, and on the bed you have something like very good-size lead shot. The pulp flows over that and the water pulsating up and down should dislodge the bbs from the screen. As the gold is the heaviest, it was supposed to work down through the bb's into the bottom. But the gold was too fine for that.

RM: Oh, it was fine gold?

ST: Yes; very fine. Then the only hope we had was the Diester Concentrating Table. So none of it worked. I think he started the mill in 1936, because he bought a new Ford ton and a half flat-bed truck and that's what we hauled the supplies out in. Myself, my brothers Starle and Don, and a couple of our friends went out there to work.

RM: Did you build the mill?

ST: There was a qualified millwright in Tonopah by the name of Guy Birch. My dad hired him and he had a carpenter who worked with him, and the two of them framed all that lumber by hand.

RM: You have a picture of it here and it's a huge structure. It must have been an incredible job to build it up that high.

ST: I still can't believe the men doing it - cutting a 6x6 with a hand saw, diagonals. Everything was by hand - no power tools. Old Guy Birch was an artisan and he was very well known and respected for his ability. So we built the mill and a tram line, which is a way of getting the ore down from the mine - one car would pull the other car back up. In the middle of it there was kind of an overpass - one car would go over the other car. One had 2 sets of wheels on it and it worked, but the whole problem was that we didn't develop the ore body; we built the stupid mill first.

I have to admit that my father was more of a dreamer than a mining man. He was honest as the day is long and [through] the years he worked out there, if he made a nickel an hour he was quite lucky. I have to say that the family did get a living out of it at the expense of terribly hard work.

RM: How long did it take them to build the mill?

ST: I think they started pretty early in the spring, because I remember I was driving the truck bringing the material out and I got stuck down below the Bradshaw tunnel in an area that was kind of marshy in the spring. It was pretty early in the spring and the creek was running real high. I believe that the mill was under cover before winter. Have you seen it?

RM: From down below. I've never been . . .

ST: It's 2 levels with an ore bin on the 3rd level, and in between the 3rd level was a crusher and another ore bin. The rough rock was dumped into the 1st ore bin and it went to the crusher and it was crushed down to about 3/4 of an inch in size and it would go into the 2nd bin and it was fed from there into the ball mill. That actually constituted the mill level . . .

RM: Did the water come from the spring?

ST: No, we piped up. We dug a well up by the camp, which was a 1/4 of a mile or less, and piped it down from there. We didn't have to pump it; it ran downhill. But the well would not produce enough water for the mill once the creek quit running.

RM: Does Eden Creek run year-round?

ST: No. Old Billy Fallini, whose father Giovanni homesteaded at the mouth of the canyon and came down from Tybo - I believe in 1901 - told me that Eden Creek ran year-round then. It ran north as far as Twin Springs. That's the reason he settled there - it was virgin land, full of rocks, with this big creek running year-round.

RM: Is it your perception that it's drier in this country than it used to be?

ST: Oh, I would say 5 or 6 times as dry. When I was a kid we regularly had snow in Tonopah from around November until March or April. Everybody walked, and the old cars wouldn't go through the snow. We had severe, cold winters. In the early '30s it started to be more moderate, with less snow. You know for yourself we don't have much snow now; you get 6 inches and people are horrified.

RM: It just seems that the country is drier.

ST: Oh, Lord yes. I remember times when Tonopah would be snowed in, or snowed out. There would be 2 or 3 weeks that even the train couldn't get

in. The roads between here and Goldfield would be impassable many times during the winter.

RM: So the sagebrush and grass was more abundant, with flowers in the spring and everything.

ST: I was trying to remember when we had the first real dry winter and summer. I think it was in the early '30s. We have had one or two winters that were fairly bad, but they have never been long as far as snow is concerned; it'll snow and then it'll melt. It used to snow and keep building up.

RM: You mentioned that when you built the Eden Creek Mill you neglected the ore body. Was that a common thing among many people who went hog wild on the mill?

ST: I think it happened more times than not. I know a lot of times, in the excitement of finding an ore body, the first thing you do is build a mill.

RM: Before you've actually mapped out the dimensions.

ST: Before you've blocked out any tonnage. Consequently you don't last long, because the ore bodies don't last. Now, I think the Eden Creek vein has a potential of being quite a producer; I don't know. The sad thing about it is that I believe it's all going to be underground work. What good is an underground mine nowadays, when they want to haul 60 to 80 tons at once. Good Lord, an 80-ton truck then would have run our mill for 3 days, going 24 hours a day.

RM: I can remember back in the 1950s that you and your brothers would come up there and you were doing some work there.

ST: Just doing the assessment work.

RM: So you built the mill in the '30s, and then was that the end of the

really hard work there?

ST: The sad thing is that my father got enough money . . . Up on the Crucible Hills there was quite an outcrop of breccia. Breccia is a formation that usually is formed up through a volcanic pipe. They don't tilt, they don't have a definite foot wall or hanging wall, it's like a big pipe. The breccia deposits in Arizona have been some awfully big mines; good mines. Up on top of Crucible there was a big breccia pipe and we started to drive a tunnel in between South Gold and Eden Creek. The tunnel is almost 1000 feet long.

RM: When did you drive that tunnel?

ST: It was driven after the mill was built, before the war. I went out by myself and started the tunnel. We built a blacksmith's shop and a compressor and cut a flat spot there, and we laid pipe over to where we were going to start the tunnel. My next brother, Starle's, wife was expecting a child. He came into town and I started the tunnel myself.

RM: Were you living out there by yourself?

ST: I had to do the drilling, the mucking, the blasting, sharpen the steel - oh, boy. We had a jackhammer, and everything else was by hand.

RM: How far did you drive it in by yourself?

ST: I must have been in about 75 feet. This was in the fall. Then we came to town to do something for Christmas and a terrible snow storm hit the whole area and we didn't get back out until the next spring.

RM: So you drove this tunnel, eventually a 1000 foot tunnel, and you were going to come in under the pipe?

ST: Yes. But, once again, my father was not a mining man. We should have had a surveyor survey the tunnel. We went in about 90 feet and we made a turn. The last geologist we had out there, whom I respected, said that we

were probably 80 or 90 feet north of the pipe. Because as we were getting back in, the ground was getting more broken because of the action of all the molten rock pouring into the pipe. I know a couple of times since then . . . The people who own it now have had geologists up there and they feel that it's probably 60 to 100 feet . . .

Q: Then you missed the pipe?

A: Oh, yes. We could have ended up over on the other side of the range.

Q: Did the pipe show indications on the top?

A: Yes. It's hard to remember back 40 or 50 years, but I believe it ran at the old price of gold - about \$6 - \$30 gold.

Q: That sounds like a good prospect.

A: It depends on if the the pipe got larger as it went down. It was a series of pipes 50 to 80 feet across. There was another one farther up the hill, so there was a lot of activity underground at one time. We did cut a couple of veins on the way in, but they didn't run anything.

Q: You mentioned that you lived out there and drove the first 75 feet by yourself. I think people now and in the future will want to understand what it was like for a person to live out in that remote area and work alone. Can you tell us a little bit about what it was like to be out there alone and working?

A: I enjoyed it. In fact, prior to that, when I was maybe 16 or 17 I would go out there in the summer and my dad would be working in town. He had a couple of places he wanted me to work and I'd go out there and work by myself most of the summer. I'd enjoy it.

CHAPTER FOUR

ST: In the evenings I would come down from whatever I was doing and cook supper, and if it was chilly I'd build a fire. I had a radio and I always liked to read. Then at different times my father would come out or I'd go to town occasionally. We would go down to the old Polin store where the Jim Butler Motel is now and he'd tear the covers off the magazines he couldn't sell and send them back to the company to be reimbursed, then give you the magazines. I'd read anything; I loved to read.

RM: Was it by a kerosene lantern?

ST: I think so, and then we got really progressive and had gas lanterns - they were better and brighter. The solitude didn't bother me a bit.

There was a man living over the hill about 3 miles named Georgy Chubey. I believe he was Serbian. He was a fine little man, but as a miner he was dumber than my father. And he had made a little discovery over there.

RM: Whereabouts was that?

ST: If you were standing on top of South Gold Hill, you would look down to the southeast, about 2 miles. He found a little streak of gold down there that was unbelievable. He drove tunnels, he sank shafts, all dug by hand, and it never produced a nickel. When he got broke, he'd go up to Tybo and go to work.

RM: What was happening at Tybo?

ST: They had a big mill up there: lead, zinc, and silver. George would go up and work as a miner for 3 to 5 months, save every nickel and go right to Eden Creek. He was a fine man; one of the hardest workers I ever met in my life.

RM: Whatever became of him?

ST: George bought a car, and to say he was one of the world's worst

drivers would be to give him credit. He was coming out of Tybo one day and he turned the car over and was killed. He died in the County Hospital here a couple of days later. He had been married and had one daughter who lived in California, whom I never did meet.

RM: When you were working alone, did you ever worry about getting hurt, breaking a leg . . . ?

ST: It never entered my head. I really enjoyed the solitude. After 2 or 3 weeks, I would like someone to talk to and once in awhile one of the Fallini boys would drive by, or maybe one of the Indians, and I'd talk to them. But it's not like talking to your family - these were real brief conversations.

RM: I would like to get as much on the history of the Reveille Mill as possible. I wonder if you can tell me what you know about it? You have a picture here, dated 1926, and from your first sitings of the mill, could you say a little bit about who was there and what happened?

ST: We first went there in the early '30s and there was nobody there.

RM: That was a water hole for a long time.

ST: The original mill was fed by the springs that we always referred to as: "by the Indian Camp." There is a little basin up there to the west 2 or 3 miles, and they had a nice big spring up there where the Indians had their camp later on, and they might have had it then; I don't know. They did pipe the water down to the Reveille Mill, and there is a storage tank there yet where water goes for the cattle. But there were no buildings. The 5-stamp mill was still up, and the uprights, the cam was on it and the big flywheel, but no buildings. The roasting kiln was there.

You see, the ore at the Reveille silver mine had a little bit of lead in it. The only way they could treat that ore was to roast it. It was

silver chlorides, I think, and silver bromides, and they roasted it and got the impurities out of it, and that left the silver. They put it through the stamp mill and then ran it over amalgamation plates and the silver would stick to the quicksilver like gold would. In fact, later on somebody named Belleville worked on the tailings for the quicksilver that they lost; the quicksilver had some values in it.

RM: Did Belleville build the mill then? [The one] that was there when we got there in the '50s?

ST: He had put up a building and they hauled the tailings up by truck, and I think all he was looking for was the quicksilver. There were not that many tailings. I have no idea how much ore the mill produced, because that was around the turn of the century.

RM: So they were mining the silver ore over at Reveille in the Reveille Range?

ST: They used oxen to haul the ore over.

RM: Because that was the nearest water, I guess. It would have been closer than Twin Springs.

ST: Yes, and it would have been a haul down the hill and up a slight slope to where they built the mill. There was another stamp mill at the mouth of Eden Canyon, a small, 5-stamp battery. The battery was still there and there were 2 stone buildings. One was large - about 20' by 40'. They had logs for the roof and it was covered with pine boughs with dirt over that. There was a smaller stone building closer to the canyon and no one knew the history of it at all. Mr. Fallini came to Eden Creek right after the turn of the century and he didn't know anything about it either. I would think they were both built somewhere in the 1870s to 1900. I think the small one was a pilot mill for Reveille, because you could still find small pieces of

ore, some silver chloride and some silver bromides, and they probably wanted to see if they could recover it. I don't remember any kind of a roasting affair, but they could have had a small one.

RM: Was there a pretty good tailings there?

ST: No, no tailings whatsoever.

RM: So they didn't run much.

ST: If they did run it, the little mill was sitting right up on the bank above Eden Creek and they probably used the creek for water to turn the mill. But there was no sign of a boiler or anything, so they must have used water power and the tailings from the mill probably went down to the bottom of the gulch, and when the creek ran heavy, it just washed them away.

RM: You say they were probably getting their ore from Reveille too, but we don't even know, do we?

ST: No, but there is no other silver mine in the area. The only other mine in the area was up at Bellehelen, but it wasn't that kind of ore.

RM: You were saying the other night that you thought perhaps they eventually moved their milling operation down to where the Reveille Mill is now and saved a couple of miles on haul.

ST: A good 3 or 4, and uphill, too. And there was plenty of water up at the Indian Camp, and they piped it down. I think I've seen sections of the pipe and it was rolled pipe, riveted the full length. When Tonopah built their first water line, the water pipe was wood wrapped with steel coil. They must have hauled this metal pipe down and it must have been quite an undertaking; it was all buried. They probably worked during the winter, too.

RM: So the sequence of development at Reveille was that originally they

were hauling ore out of the Reveille Mine in the Reveille Range.

Originally it must have been at Eden Creek.

ST: I would assume that the little mill was a trial mill to see if they could recover the silver. [Then] they built the bigger one and the ovens down where the Reveille Mill is now, where the present ruins are, somewhere in the 1870s, '80s, or '90s.

RM: By the time you got there 50 years later, what was there?

ST: Nothing. Somebody had taken the stamp stems or rods. The cam was still there, but they took the vertical part. That was usually a big steel shaft that was keyed to a cast iron stamp, which raised and dropped on the ore. The front of the box had a screen, and every time this hit with water, it splashed up against the screen and what was ground would go through the screen. It was very inefficient, but it was the only thing they had.

RM: And, there were no buildings at the Reveille Mill?

ST: There were no buildings there but the remains of a few stone cabins. I think it was kind of a very austere camp. Maybe some of the miners stayed over at the mine, but I would think the teamsters would stay at the mill location because of the water.

RM: They built that huge stone corral, which showed that something was going on there.

ST: They might have had tents in those days. They had them during the Civil War, so . . .

I know farther up in the hills, where they were cutting wood for the kiln, there are some little log dugouts dug into the hillside, with rock faces. They're all caved in.

RM: So there wasn't much there when you got there in the early '30s.

Somebody built a full mill there, because when we got there in 1954 there was a . . . I think the table was already there and there was a little ball mill, and an ore bin, and a feeder. I always heard it referred to as Belleville's Mill.

ST: I think Belleville built it. I think he was trying to mine the ore over at Reveille and truck it over there, and I believe he had a little ball mill. But it's another one of those situations where he didn't know how complex the ore was. Later on in mines that had this type of ore [they] would have flotation or cyanidation. He didn't last long and I can't remember much about it.

RM: When did he come in there?

ST: It might have been during the war.

RM: What was happening at the Reveille lead mine?

ST: It seems to me there were a couple of people who tried to mine the Reveille lead mine. Since the original camp of Reveille is on the east side of the Reveille Range and the lead mine is on the west side, I'm trying to think who worked that mine. Madison Locke had it for awhile. Lead in Nevada has always been more or less a losing proposition, except down in Pioche and up in Tybo; places like that.

RM: Tybo was lead?

ST: Yes. Lead, silver, and zinc. They had trucks that used to haul the concentrates in town. They were just trucks, not trailers, and they had a flat box on them with about 8" sides and they would dump that . . . It came off the flotation cells and when they would come in to town, it was just like jello. You had old Faegol trucks and they might be 6" thick, and it was fully loaded. They unloaded it to the box cars by hand with shovels and that was hard work, picking up a shovel full of lead. It ran for a

long time. It was the Treadwell-Yukon Mining Company.

RM: Then my dad came in there in 1954, I think. He tried milling the ore from the Reveille lead mine in Belleville's old mill and he was there off and on until 1958 or so. They built a cookshack and bunkhouse there and moved in a couple of cabins.

ST: They moved the cabins down from Eden Creek.

RM: Oh, from your place?

ST: Yes. They asked us about it and we told them to go ahead.

RM: What was your thinking in letting them move them down?

ST: Well, when you are involved in mining, poor-boying it, you always find somebody who would be willing to help you. Normally it's not money, but through giving. We had five cabins and no one was staying there. Your father and his brother needed some cabins, and we said go up and haul them down. We could care less.

RM: They hauled down 3, I think.

ST: Two or 3. One of the cabins was the one I lived in off and on for about 5 years.

RM: Those cabins were cold in the winter - you must have frozen.

ST: Well . . . a lot of blankets. You had as much over you as under you.

RM: I remember I had one, my brother had one, and the old man had one to sleep in. I made a stove out of a barrel. We usually hung out in the old man's cabin where we cooked and everything, but I made a stove out of part of a 50-gallon barrel, and it would get hotter than a firecracker just like that, but 10 minutes after it was out, you were freezing in there in the winter.

ST: Just like you were outside; I know all about it.

We always traded stuff. It wasn't trading; we'd give to someone, and

later on he might give something to someone else. Everyone helped everyone out, hoping that one of them would make some money. I know that when we had the tungsten property and the fluorspar property, we scrounged things for it. We took a lot of stuff out of Eden Creek for our fluorspar mine - pipe, rails, ore cars and so forth. And on the tungsten we took the ball mill out of the building, and we took the crusher and the concentrating table.

RM: Why don't you talk a little bit about the tungsten mine? I have very vivid memories of some of that.

ST: My brother Starle found it. There were 2 brothers named Myers who lived in Tonopah - Phillip and Louie Myers.

RM: Were they Indians?

ST: No. They acted like Indians, especially Louie, because he was out in the hills prospecting all the time. And he found this high-grade tungsten.

RM: How did he find it? Was he looking on a granite-lime contact?

ST: That's what he was looking at, because tungsten was good. He found this deposit and his father was a machinist. His brother Phil and his father came out and they built a little mill. The deposit is in the Quinn Canyon Range. The Myers' property is north of the Troy Canyon property . . . There's Cherry Creek where Adaven was and where the Sharps had a ranch, and there's a road that goes over the hills, down into Adaven, and the next canyon is Troy, an old, old gold camp that goes back to about the 1870s or '80s. Then this property of the Myers' was about 4 miles on the road, north. And ours - the one that Starle found - was over the hills from there.

RM: This would have been about 1953 or 1954?

ST: Something like that. We went out and started to sink a shaft and it

looked pretty promising, so we decided to get all the mill equipment and put a mill there, which we did. We did produce quite a bit of tungsten, but not enough to make us very well off. The rock was extremely hard - it was in an epidote - and when we started the drill up we used hand-sharpened steel and the sparks would just fly off the rock. Later on a friend of ours who was working down at Timpahute scrounged some tungsten carbide steel for us. The tungsten carbide was harder than the epidote, but when you turned it on, it was just as if somebody lit a blowtorch, the sparks . . .

We produced quite a bit, and then an outfit came along and bought it from us, which was a big mistake on our part. And the fellow sank the shaft - he drove a tunnel in. We could never understand why, because the tunnel was longer than the depth he got; it didn't make sense. But he hit a big kidney of ore and shipped a lot of ore out of there. He had 6 or 7 men working, and trucks hauling from there over to the Union Carbide mill out of Bishop. I knew some of the truck drivers. One of them, especially, knew ore, and he said that they would load the truck from an ore bin they built. Sometimes he would borrow the guy's black light and he said he figured the ore was running 10 to 15 percent.

And the guy wasn't paying his bills, wasn't paying his help, and he finally ran into a tree somewhere and killed himself.

RM: Was that the end of the mine?

ST: Well, we booted him off and sold it again, but it didn't amount to much. The guy didn't know what he was doing. He had a little bit of money but no brains. We took it back again and leased it a couple of times, and then the bottom fell out of the tungsten market. I just gave the property away a month ago, to John Locke and his brother.

RM: I always remember that spring, where the water is ice cold, and a real

treat in the hot summer.

ST: We went up and burned all the willows out and in one place where it was coming out of the ground, we had Gene Locke, who had been up there doing some cat work for us, dig out a place to impound the water. We burned the willows out for two reasons: There were rattlesnakes in there, and we wanted to find the source of the water. We found one place where we took a long steel rod and kept working up and down and that water came pouring out of there. It ran like wildfire for 2 or 3 weeks and then went right back to where it was. It was an underground reservoir, I guess, that had built up, but it was good water and it gave us enough to run the mill. The mine produced quite a bit of good sheelite.

RM: With your experience in mining in the rural areas out of Tonopah, what do you see as the challenges that the miner, the prospector, the developer faced out there?

ST: The first thing was lack of money. Maybe even before that was the lack of mining sensibility . . . in fact, you said it the other day: Very few men would have gone deeper than one foot in most of these mines that have been worked in Nevada, in fact all through the west, if the person in charge had sat down with a piece of paper and a pencil and started analyzing what he was trying to do and what he was going to end up with.

CHAPTER FIVE

ST: Well, I believe that to be involved in mining you have to be a dreamer - just to dream that the next round is going to make me a million dollars. Most of the ones I've known in my life are not practical. There's no way in the world, unless you're lucky enough to come upon a high-grade outcrop,

that you can go out with a pick and shovel and hand steel and make any money. I have to admit that I spent years doing it, but I was young and believed in my father. I can't badmouth him, because he was a wonderful man, but he was very impractical. What we learned through him, more or less, was that the next round was going to do it - hit the bonanza. Very few people ever hit a bonanza and very few people walked out with even \$10 in their pockets. We had a fluorspar property that we worked and there was a corporation, Gould, sent out a mining engineer to talk to us. (I discovered this later.) The man was a very irritating man; 5 minutes after you met him you didn't like him, if it took that long. He went up to look at the property, took some samples and left. He came back in 2 or 3 days and said they wanted to buy the property. We said, "Well, what kind of deal do you want?" If my memory is correct, he offered us \$15,000 for it. His abrasive attitude had already enraged us, and this was an insult. We had a very fine showing of acid-grade fluorspar, it was about 6 feet wide, and we knew he was trying to rip us off.

We told him, "Get up and get out of the house and get your car and go down the road. We don't want to see you again." We found out later, through another geologist who worked for Mike Gould, that he was authorized to offer us \$45,000 cash. We would have sold it at that, but he had made us so mad that if he had thrown the \$15,000 at us in \$100 bills, we would still have thrown him out.

Later on Mickey O'Boyle, who worked for Gould, came out. He was a very fine gentleman; you couldn't help but like him. This other character had told him how hard we were to deal with, so instead of coming out and wanting to buy it, O'Boyle wanted to know if we wanted to go partners. He was such a nice guy, and we had hopes of opening up a big fluorspar

operation, so we went on that deal. They paid us so much a foot to develop our own property, which in some ways was good. If the property did develop, then later down the road Gould would take it over and we would get royalties off the fluorspar. We drove a tunnel there 400 feet.

RM: Where was that property?

ST: South of Nyala and east of Warm Springs in the Quinn Canyon Range in Water Canyon. It never turned out the way it should have. The fluorspar is still there. They bring in fluorspar from all over the world cheaper than you can begin to produce it here.

RM: When did you have that property?

ST: It was before the tungsten; probably the late '40s, early '50s.

RM: What other challenges have you observed over the years that people out here face in terms of trying to bring a property in?

ST: Most of the big gold producers were known then, but they were not economically feasible.

RM: Yes; 5/100th's ore.

ST: In Tonopah, if one mine was producing 200 to 300 tons per day, it took 3 shifts of miners to produce that small amount of ore. They have trucks [today] that haul that much. Of course, a dollar was a dollar and now a dollar has an actual buying power of about 5 cents. Now they produce gold, not by the ounce, but by the hundreds of pounds. I read in the paper [that] 50 years ago the Mizpah mine shipped 62 bars of bullion worth \$60,000 and these modern mines couldn't even operate for a day on that. But in those days they were making money hand over fist. The challenge in those days was to find something that was high-grade enough to produce well, or to sell.

RM: Which do you think was paramount in most people's minds, producing or

selling?

ST: Of everyone I've ever been involved with, the true prospectors wanted to produce. They wanted to be able to sit back in their old age and say, "I'm the one that developed that particular mine." It's a great dream of mining people, to say, "I'm the one that found it; I'm the one that got it going, and I'm the one that made it what it is today." Nowadays, people find something and the first thing they want to do is sell it, because they know they can't develop it. They're smart. Who can go out and have a piece of property drilled? Maybe a quarter of a million dollars for a drilling program, and maybe the property would produce a hundred million dollars, maybe two hundred million. Look at Round Mountain; they're spending \$165 million to enlarge it, and most mines never produced that much. It's a totally different ball game. Of course, the only thing you can sell now is gold. Silver, like Candelaria, is mainly silver with gold as a by-product. They produce a lot of silver, but it's not by pick and shovel, it's with great big machines.

RM: One of the things that I always thought defeated us, in our minds, was distance. If you needed a part for something you had to drive 65 miles to town.

ST: Yes; on gas you couldn't afford to buy. Well, the problem that defeated your father, defeated us all, was no modern equipment or modern know-how. If you could go out and buy a brand new little mill where you knew if you pushed a button, it would start running and producing bullion or concentrates . . . but they didn't work that way. When we started that tungsten mine, we bought a little stamp mill. It was all metal and the stamps were about 3 inches in diameter, that's how naive we were. We bought it and we had a diesel generator that came from Eden Creek for

power. Well, it wouldn't grind enough ore to make a cupful of concentrates. Stamp mills are notorious for sliming sheelite. Sheelite, on impact, will turn to slime and go right off in the water. As heavy as it is, it just turns to milk, so in our super intelligence, we bought a big stamp mill. We bought one out of Mina, a big 5 stamp mill.

We went up and dismantled it, moved it up and poured a big cement base for it and set it up and then we had to have stamps made for it. Luckily the smelter at McGill made them for us. They made us 5 big stamps, and that was 5 times the disaster the other one was. It ground more ore, but it made more slime. We produced a little bit of concentrates, but it wasn't worth the effort. That's when we decided to move the ball mill over; ball mills were not as bad as stamp mills for sliming. But most mills they used for sheelite were rod mills.

RM: Are rods better than balls?

ST: Yes, because there's no impact; they just roll on each other. The best thing in the world to produce . . . The Meyers had a little stamp mill, but they crushed their ore very fine and put that over a table; and crushers do not turn sheelite into milk. They produced real good concentrates and from that they went to a little Tetro Stamp Mill. It was a stamp mill that was round and it had a cam on it that rotated and raised these little stamps. They were spring loaded and would snap back down. They produced a lot of good sheelite. But those big stamp mills we had; good God! If a person my age was involved in mining, there were 2 things that would insure him a ticket to heaven: He either had to own a Model-T Ford, or he had to own a stamp mill. With either one, you would have had your Hell on Earth. I know the Lord up there is saying "Terrell, you have your ticket to Heaven, 'cause you've owned 3 Model-Ts and been involved in

2 stamp mills." But in spite of all the hardships and doing without, it was a fine life; I don't regret one moment of it.

RM: Can you say something about the . . . I remember when I was a kid out here, there was what I would call a Nevada character, or a Nevada spirit. It was the guy who was going to go out there and take on the wilderness. Basically he didn't know what he was doing, but he took it on.

ST: Let me tell you about a fellow who lived here. We called him Rocky Mountain George; I have no idea what his last name was. Rocky Mountain George was from New York City. He was one of the finest little educated gentlemen you could ever meet in your life. He was a diamond cutter in New York City for years and worked for some of the big jewelry outfits, cutting diamonds and making gems out of them. Somewhere Rocky Mountain George got the idea that he was going to come west and make his fortune in mining. He was short and fairly huskily built, and at that time I thought he was old. This was before the war. He went prospecting and he usually prospected down at the head of Death Valley. You know how he got down there? He walked. He would do odd jobs around Tonopah and accumulate a little bit of money and he had a pack and bedroll, and he'd put it on his back and walk down to the head of Death Valley, and go prospecting.

Later on he took up with a woman who was here. She was a nice lady, and she was a loner just like George. After they took up with each other, they would both walk to Death Valley. He'd do a little panning down there, and get all excited and hustle around, do a lot of odd jobs so he could go back down again. He never made a nickel. I don't know whatever happened to old George; he might have died while I was gone during the war. Here was a man who left a secure job, came out here to be a mining man, and didn't know any more about mining than my dog Jake. But he was a fine

little man - I've often thought about him.

RM: But there was the perception, and I think it was more a perception than a reality, that with a little luck and a lot of hard work, and pitting yourself against the forces of nature, you might have a chance.

ST: Yes, the chance was always there.

RM: Was that the driving force behind it?

ST: Oh, sure. You've read of all the mining booms from the gold rush in California . . . To my knowledge, the last one happening in Nevada was the Weepah boom. There are bigger booms now, but they're all being done by million-dollar corporations.

RM: There's no place for the little guy, is there? When did the little guy drop out?

ST: I think it started about 1935 and it's been going on ever since. When the Depression was at its worst in the cities, it wasn't bad in the mining camps because you could go out and lease. You could always make a few bucks, and you knew you weren't going to get rich unless you hit a nice stope of ore in one of the mines. Most [miners] were feeding their families and making money. In the cities, you couldn't buy a job.

RM: Leasing came back in Tonopah during the Depression, didn't it. Initially Jim Butler and those guys had leasing, but then Brock and his associates controlled it all. Did they lease?

ST: No. Most of the leases were all verbal and they were for 60 days or 6 months; nothing in writing. And as the lease expired, they had to leave. The company that bought them out more or less honored them. Most of them were honorable men, almost everybody was fairly honorable. A person's word was his bond and his bond was as good as gold, but they never had leases after that. The Montana had a few, I think, prior to the Depression, but I

think it was the only one.

RM: The rest was just a day's work?

ST: Yes. It was one of those deals where they were gainfully employed making good money. When the mines shut down, the Mizpah was the first one to reopen to the leasers, because it was accessible from the surface and it was not a deep mine; the ore body was only 600 feet deep.

RM: Well, how did those leases work? Were they verbal?

ST: No, they were written. They were all owned by companies. You could take a lease on a certain block of land, or a certain block of the mine. It might be 100 by 100 by 100 feet. You could go down and prospect for your lease. If you found a little streak that looked good, you could go to the boss or manager - at the time it was Horace Johnson - and draw up a lease and they furnished the air to you, to run your jack hammer, and track and the cars and that, and pipe to get air back, and then the value of the ore determined the amount of lease and what the lease would cost you. If you shipped, say, 50 ton that went \$40, it would be a certain percent. If it went \$60, it would be a higher percent. It was a good deal for the guy; he might be able to afford to buy dynamite.

RM: Did he have to furnish his own powder?

ST: Yes; steel and everything.

RM: Did they hoist for you?

ST: They charged for the hoist. When you were hoisting ore, it was to your benefit, but if you hoisted waste, it cost you money, so you back-filled all the old works you could with waste. If you found a streak 8 inches wide, you didn't drive a four-foot drift on it. You drove a real narrow drift, because you had to get rid of that waste.

RM: That was counter productive for the company, because they backfilled

possible places . . .

ST: Places where you couldn't get in to prospect after awhile; it was full of rock. I think that it was economics, because it was pretty expensive to operate a mine.

RM: What made the mining companies turn to leasing during the Depression?

ST: Well, they knew they had ore, and they knew a company could not make a living on them, because the company could not go down and work a one-foot streak and send it to a mill that took 200 and 300 tons a day. You didn't stop and start a cyanide mill every other day; you had to keep those tanks moving all the time. You could stop the stamps, but those tanks had to keep going, otherwise the stuff would all settle to the bottom and it had to be mucked out by hand. So it was economics, and I think the companies did pretty well.

RM: Was there activity all through the 1930s?

ST: All the time. The Mizpah opened up first and then the Belmont.

RM: What precipitated the actual closure?

ST: They closed when silver hit 25 cents. They couldn't make it on that.

RM: It must have been a terrible thing for the town.

ST: Say you had a ton of ore that went 20 ounces and you were getting \$18, \$19, or \$20 in silver, you were getting \$5. Especially the Mizpah. They had to haul their ore clear down to Millers on the railroad, and they had a huge mill down there which was very expensive to operate. All of a sudden from a dollar you're down to 25 cents.

Some of the smarter miners went up and worked the little narrow streaks, and there were different places you could send the rock, such as Selby on the Bay. There were two or three smelters that were glad to get ore, to keep the smelters open. It was to everybody's advantage. And the

town . . . times were really tough for most of us, and there was still cash money moving around. Not in the large quantities prior to that, but a lot of miners moved somewhere else looking for work.

RM: When did the pneumatic drill come in?

ST: I don't believe hand steel and double lasted very long; I think they had very crude pneumatic hammers early.

RM: Why did they drill dry?

ST: The technology for drilling wet wasn't there. To drill with water you had to have steel with a hole down the middle and you had to have a way of getting it into the steel. It wasn't complicated, but I guess no one thought about it too much.

RM: Silicosis was a terrible problem, wasn't it?

ST: It killed many men in Tonopah - thousands and thousands in all. These big, husky guys would come over from England, Serbia, Finland and that, and they might be dead in a year. In the winter time they'd get pneumonia and influenza easily. It was a horrible thing. They had an awful influenza panic there one time. It killed a lot of people in Tonopah.

RM: Because they were weakened to begin with.

ST: Yes, by the dust. Two-thirds of their lungs were gone. Poof, they were dead overnight. It was a disgrace, but no one knew any better, really.

RM: When the water came in, was there any hesitancy or resistance to it?

ST: I think the companies, to protect themselves by keeping the work force there, had to go to water. You couldn't get anyone to go to work in a mine here; it was economics again.

RM: Even though they were drilling, why didn't they wet down the muck piles in the early days?

ST: Why go to that bother? Most of the dust came out of the drills. Most rocks - the quartz - was totally dry. It would just pour out of the hole. I don't know how the guy stood it, I really don't.

RM: When was the problem of silicosis pretty well solved?

ST: Some of the men who were leasing in the '30s would drill dry, and you could still buy dry machines. For awhile they would drill dry hoping they could find something. I know that some of the kids I went to school with ended up with miner's con, [though it was] not severe. It was something that people never thought about, that that fine silica would get in your lungs. Not only would it cut the lungs just like glass, it would also react to oxygen. Silica and oxygen and water turned to an acid, and that's what makes those spots on your lungs.

RM: Do you have any dust?

ST: I wouldn't doubt it, because I worked in mines off and on from the time I was a kid, though not in Tonopah. One day in Tonopah was enough for me.

RM: Was there a lot of dust in town?

ST: No, not so bad. It was about like now. The only dumps that would be really windy would be at Millers - that big sandpile down there. Most of the dust in Tonopah is just dust from the desert.

CHAPTER SIX

ST: My brother Don and I took a lease on a property that the Myers had out near Ellendale. They had located the Golden Arrow gold mine, which created quite a bit of excitement in the '20s. It was quite a deep, incline shaft on it, quite a nice vein, about 4 feet thick. Most of the vein didn't have

any values in it; it occurred in pockets and streaks. Don and I had taken this lease on the property that Louie had found and somebody had already sunk a shaft on it. We worked on it maybe a month and we moved one of our cabins from Eden Creek on it; set it on the dump. We had a compressor and we had a '36 Ford that belonged to my father. We shipped one carload of ore to McGill and it didn't run hardly anything, about \$10 or \$12. It was a miserable place to work, so Myers came over one day and we told him we were going to move off and look somewhere else and he said, "Why don't you come over to Golden Arrow? We'll give you a lease on part of the Golden Arrow shaft." So we drove over and went down the shaft and looked around. There was a streak on the first level down there on the west side of the shaft that they were working on the other side. The streak was about 4 inches wide and it panned pretty damn good - maybe \$25, \$30, or \$35, but it was quite narrow.

RM: It was gold?

ST: Gold; which was better than what we had had over there. So we said, "OK, what kind of deal?" He said we could have a lease, 10 percent royalty on the net. So we went over, and the first thing we did was pick up the house and move it over and set it on another dump. We moved the compressor over and they didn't have a compressor. They had a little hoist and I think the headframe was still on the shaft, or they built one. Anyway, we went down and started to raise up on this little streak. We put in a narrow round, because we didn't want to have an 8-inch vein breaking 3 feet of ore, so we made it real narrow so we could barely work it, and it widened out to about a foot. And boy, that made us look good. We thought, "Oh boy, we're going to make some money." Then we put another round in, and it got wider, so we were working about 3 feet wide, and we got one

shipment out.

The Myers were working a little streak and they got extremely jealous of what we were doing. So I hauled a load of ore to McGill for a family that lived there by the name of D. R. Jackson and Tillman. They had a lease up on a hill and their truck was broken down, so I hauled a load of ore for them because they were having tough times. When I got back, I drove the truck up and Jackson went along with me. I pulled up to the cabin and my brother Don came out of the cabin. He looked pretty upset and I asked him, "What is the problem?"

He said, "The Myers kicked us off the property." We had been booted off the Golden Arrow.

In those days, everything was done on a handshake. I had trusted them; I trusted Louie. I have kind of a short fuse sometimes, especially when I feel that somebody has put it to me, so I said, "I'm going down there and have a talk with those sons-of-bitches."

Don said, "You'd better be careful. I'll go down with you."

"No," I said, "you stay here. I'm going down." So I walked down to their cabin, which was maybe 200 feet from ours, and the only one I saw was Phil. He was sitting in front of the door.

Let me backtrack a little bit. The father was a believer in Nazism. He was of German descent and I didn't particularly like him on account of that, because the Germans were causing all that trouble over in Europe. So I said to Phil, "I want to talk to your father."

Phil said, "You're not going to talk to him."

"I'm going to talk to your father," I said.

He said, "Well, I'll get a gun."

I said, "You get the gun, and that will be the second big mistake you

made, because you're going to have it rammed up your ----." I said, "I'm going to talk to that Nazi son-of-a-bitch if I have to throw you down a mineshaft." I went over and walked into the house and the old man was listening to the radio. I said, "I want to talk to you, you lousy bastard."

He said, "There's nothing to talk about."

I said, "Perhaps there isn't, but I'm going to tell you what I think of you and your worthless Goddamn kids." I proceeded, for about 10 minutes, to call him every name I could think of, then I left. I don't know where Louie was. Louie was real simple-minded, but I think he was honest. Phil was a little bit touched in the head I felt, and the old man was a no-good bastard, so that was my contact with the Myers. I never did trust them after that.

RM: Did you wind up having to leave?

ST: No, there was another fellow who had a property up in the hills named Clarence Lucas. He had a little gold mine up there on the west side of the Kawich. He was up in the foothills, farther up. He had a place up there with a little streak of good, gold ore. So we went over and told him we were getting ready to pull out, and he said, "Maybe we could go in partners on my mine."

Don and I said, "Let's go look at it." So we went up the next day and looked at it. The shaft was down about 40 feet I guess; a fairly steep incline. Clarence didn't have anything. He had a windlass and he was hand-steeling it. We went down the shaft and he had a streak about 4 inches wide of white quartz. And I'm not exaggerating - you could pick the gold and the horn silver right out of the quartz. We said, "Well, it doesn't look very big, but it's worth giving it a try. What kind of a

deal?"

He said, "Well, let's try it for 50-50 for a month and see how it comes along."

"OK, we'll move our compressor up and build a little head frame." He had a little hoist that old man Myers had made out of a Model-T transmission. I don't think he was doing much work, so we did all that - put skids down the mine, built a little head frame, and went down and put in a short round, because the vein was very narrow. It widened out to maybe 6 inches and we put in about a foot round. Every time we put in a round, it got wider. We finally had two feet of that vein, believe that or not.

RM: What did it run?

ST: We never had it assayed. It took us almost 2 weeks to get our equipment moved up, get the frame built, get the compressor set up, get the skids down the mine, air and water pipes, so we still had about 2 weeks to work. We took out one truckload of ore. It went 5-1/2 to 6 tons, out of that streak. Then he blew up, because we blew a tire on the truck and we were sharing expenses. He didn't feel that he had to help pay for a tire, which then was about \$35. We said we would take it out of the returns when we get them back. "No, get off the property," he said.

So we said fine. We pulled our equipment and moved off. I was waiting around to get the returns back. I had a '36 Ford and I told my brother, "I'm going down to visit Clydene." She was living in San Jose. I had a few bucks; I always had a few bucks, even then.

He said, "OK, I'll just wait till we get the returns back."

I said, "If you get them before I come back, give me a call, and you can send me some money." I had no idea what this stuff would run. We were

splitting this check right down the middle, 50 percent for Lucas and 50 percent for Don and me. He called me on the phone and said, "I'm going to send you a certified check for your share."

"Oh, good. How much?" It was \$1,200. My share. So, Don and I got \$2,400. \$5,000. One truckload.

RM: What happened with the mine after that?

ST: Well, Clarence got rich. He had \$2,400, so he quit working, bought a car and he and his wife would go to town. They had a couple of kids and instead of buying a fairly large can of fruit, he'd buy little tiny cans. And he was buying booze. I stayed down with my sister for a couple of weeks. I had a hell of a time getting money out of that certified check. The bank wouldn't give me any money until it cleared. Oh, I had a row with that banker. I said, "My brother pays to guarantee this check, issued by the bank, and you will not clear it." So he gave me an advance of \$50 to open up a checking account. I finally came home and Clarence didn't do doodily. He finally started gambling, came into town almost every day drinking; a big shot. In about 3 months he was broke and didn't have any equipment except an old car.

So 2 fellows in town, one by the name of Willie Martin and one of the Eason boys, went out and looked at the mine. When we shipped the ore, the vein was pinching down but there was still some up in the ceiling and some down at the bottom. Willie and Eason wanted this little property and Willie Martin had a 1940 Ford that he was buying and Eason had a little bit of money. So Clarence ended up with the '40 Ford - it was like new - and more or less the equivalent in money of \$500 cash.

Martin and Eason produced a couple of truckloads of it; they did pretty well. The ironic thing was that I was working in town for Forrest

Lovelock, who owned the Midland Garage and the National Coal Company, and he took the car back from Clarence Lucas and I bought it from the Lovelock. I gave him \$500 for it. I drove that and sold it after the war for \$900.

RM: Did the ore pinch out on them?

ST: It got down real narrow, till it wasn't worth working. If I was younger, I'd love to have that property. I'd like to try and see . . .

RM: Who owns it?

ST: The Cliffords own it. It was the most beautiful ore you ever saw in your life. That pure white quartz, with little chunks you could pick out and horn silver, but chunks of horn silver.

RM: But it was narrow and belled out and narrowed back down again?

ST: Made a kidney, yes. On the original discovery they drove a tunnel in that did the same thing, on the vein. The vein is still down at the bottom of the shaft and we shipped one truckload out of it, before things blew up with Lucas, and you could pan it. But you couldn't see any gold in it.

There was a gray metal, and it panned quite a bit of gray metal. We didn't believe Lucas because he was not what you could call truthful. So we shipped one truckload out of that and it seemed to me that it went about \$18, which was pretty good ore even then.

RM: But nothing like what you had.

ST: Oh, no. We never dreamed that we would have ore like that. If we had we would have been putting it in sacks.

RM: Where did you ship ore in those days?

ST: To McGill. It was close, and they paid you for the silica in the ore. We shipped a lot of ore from Clifford up there that would maybe run \$7 or \$8 and we had a truck going almost every day. But it ran high in silica and maybe they only charged us 25 cents a ton to smelt it, so we were

getting the freight out of it.

RM: Otherwise, what would they charge you?

ST: Well, normally about \$3.50. They paid you so much for every percent of silica over 60 . . . They had to have silica to treat copper ore. They had to buy silica, so they were more than glad to take good quartz ore.

RM: Did most people ship to McGill?

ST: Yes. During the leasing days, a lot of the ore was hauled to McGill. A guy ending up with 4 or 5 tons couldn't ship it on a railroad, because they would only take 40-ton lots.

RM: Was the road to McGill paved?

ST: Paved with dirt. I was trying to think when they started to pave it - maybe they started from this end. I only know that it was a corrugated dirt road.

RM: That would have been something, especially on those tires in those days - 170 miles of dirt road.

ST: Yes. They weren't the best, but a lot of ore went to McGill. A lot of it went to Selby, California.

RM: Selby, California. That's in the Bay Area?

ST: Yes. American Smelting and Refining. And the railroad line went right down there.

RM: Was that where most of the ore from Tonopah went?

ST: Yes, from the leasers. I think some of it went to Utah, too.

RM: To Tooele?

ST: I never mined one pile of rock in Tonopah; never shipped one ton.

RM: We shipped our lead cons to Tooele.

ST: That must have been a lead smelter. You mean ore from Reveille? They were lead-zinc smelters.

RM: So it was either McGill or Selby?

ST: There were a couple of efforts to build custom mills, but it's impossible to build a custom mill unless you've got 700 square miles of the same kind of ore, because a custom mill for cyanide is totally different from a custom mill for lead and zinc. The flow sheets are totally different. You don't dare mix them. Tonopah might have supported a small custom mill, but it couldn't be very big. And your recovery from a custom mill is not as good as a smelter. That's a big difference, depending upon the operation of the custom mill. I know we hauled some tungsten down to a mill this side of Hawthorne - that mill that's off between Luning and Hawthorne. And also to the one this side of Mina. We got completely ripped off on our ore. Whether they had traps somewhere and they were skimming it or what.

RM: Did they recover the pure metal in the mills here?

ST: They had to run the solution from the tanks over zinc shavings, to precipitate the gold and silver on the zinc. And then Millers had quite a little refinery built there so they would melt that down, separate the zinc from the silver to bullion and then pour the bullion.

RM: So they were pouring raw bullion?

ST: Yes; all the mills were.

RM: Did the mills shut down when the mines shut down in the '30s?

ST: When the mines shut down, the mills shut down and that was the end of it. There was not a mill that reopened in Tonopah. They had no recourse. The mill is dependent on the mine. If the mine shut down Thursday, they might have enough ore in the ore bins to run for a week, and when that was out they shut down. They shut the stamps down first and kept the tanks agitating to put the ground-up rock through the solutions and cyanide.

Once they had run the last tank out, the mill shut down completely. The force of men got smaller and smaller. They might take a week to shut a mill down. Sad thing. Then after the mill shut down, people went in and took leases on the inside of the mill. They took all the wood tanks and burned them.

RM: So each guy would, for instance, take the wood tanks, and some would take the . . .

ST: There was a one-armed guy in town who had a lease on the Extension Mill. He went in and dismantled all the tanks and burned them and saved the ashes, because the solution had leaked into the wood. Then they dug up all the dirt under the tanks because they would leak. And some places they broke up the concrete and shipped it because the solution kept leaking into the concrete over 15 or 20 years. The water would evaporate and the concrete absorbed the minerals.

RM: Did it run pretty good?

ST: Yes. He made quite a bit of money doing it. Then they would stand the iron pipes that ran from the solution tanks down to where they ran it over the zinc on end and beat them with hammers and get the rust and scale out of them and ship that. It was remarkable how ingenious they were.

They took the tailing ponds and built dikes around them, maybe a foot high, and they would flood them with water, then let them sit and evaporate and flood them again. They might do that for 3 or 4 months, then they would go along with a Fresno and take about an inch off the top, because as soon as those tailings got wet, the cyanide started to work again and would come to the surface. And they would ship the mill waste.

RM: A Fresno is a horse-drawn scrapper?

ST: Yes. But, you could still do it with those tailing ponds.

RM: Why is no one doing it now?

ST: The cost of water and the cost of labor wouldn't be worth it. And, where in hell would you ship the stuff?

RM: That's another thing against the miner now; there is no place to ship. If you had some ore, what would you do with it?

ST: You'd have to have your own little mill, so that means you would have gold, and it had better be damn high grade, too.

RM: This process of cannibalizing the mill for gold led to the dismantling of the mills, didn't it? Which then precluded them ever reopening.

ST: When the war came on, scrap metal was in great demand, and these mills were full of metal. The tanks were all redwood, but all the rods that held them together, the stamps, the pipes were full of metal. That all went to make tanks or something. A lot of it went to Japan before the war. Then they sent it back to us.

RM: Did they do the same thing in the mines with the scrap?

ST: No. I remember a lot of these dumps had rows and rows of ore cars parked out there, but they didn't pull rails out, they didn't pull pipes out, they just brought the ore cars up and ran them out on the tracks and left them there. A lot of them people bought them for souvenirs. A good majority of them, I would say, were swiped or sold for scrap. They were steel and cast iron and it was like pushing a house almost.

RM: So this process of cannibalizing for scrap made it all the more difficult to reopen.

ST: They were almost certain that the mines would never open again, as far as the mill was concerned. Because there was no mine, even after the war, that was capable of producing enough ore to support a large mill, and the mills by then were outdated. They were going to ball mills and everything

prior to the war. These mills were all built during the boom days, and were all stamp. Some of the mills, I think the Belmont, had rod mills in it. They even had pebble mills, but I never did quite understand what the pebble mills were for.

RM: They used special pebbles, didn't they?

ST: Yes. They used to mine them out between Manhattan and Belmont.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RM: Solan, why don't you continue with your review of the mining properties you had in the Kawich?

ST: That was with Clarence Lucas, my brother Don and I, and we actually worked just one month. Clarence was a little bit touched in the head, I think. We got into an argument over the fact that we were to split all the costs of the operation, which we felt included the truck. We did blow a tire out, hauling a load of ore to McGill. He felt we were trying to rip him off, and we didn't have anything in writing; it was all verbal. He had said we'd try it for one month to start with. So we said no more, and that was the end of that. Then I went down and visited my sister and came back. In the meantime, my brother Don, who was the oldest of the 3 boys, had gone out the Clifford mine, which was owned by a local guy named Walter Naismith. He was an insurance agent. How he ever got hold of it, I have no idea. A fine little guy, but he didn't know anything about mining.

RM: Where is the Clifford?

ST: It's on U.S. 6, about 45 miles going east. The road goes off to the right, which would be more or less south. I'd say it's probably 3 miles off the highway - 2 little knolls stick out of the ground. The Cliffords

had discovered that through an Indian, and it produced quite a bit of high-grade ore. There was no vein system in it; all the ore occurred in what we call "pipes."

RM: How big were the pipes?

ST: They varied in diameter. Some were the size of your thumb, and some they had one stope that was about 20 feet in diameter. It was either good ore or waste. There was nothing in between.

RM: The ore was in the pipe and that's all.

ST: It came up like a hot water solution into these chambers and depending upon the size of the chamber, it made the pipe. It was horn silver and gold. On the east side of the shaft there was more gold than there was on the west side. It was a very odd place.

RM: How deep was the shaft?

ST: I think the original discovery was about 100 feet deep. To the west of the Clifford shaft there was another shaft - the west shaft - that was quite a bit deeper, and we shipped one or two truckloads off the dump there. It was a sulfide ore, and we shipped to McGill and I think it went [for] \$20 to \$25. But that shaft had water in it because it was right down on the flat. We never went down it because the water level was pretty high. It could have been pumped out, but we didn't have anything to pump it out with. We concentrated on the little hill, and part of the deal with Naismith was that we weren't to ship any of the dumps. That was ridiculous because they were available, and we hand-sorted every truckload and shipped a lot of dumps and they never knew the difference. He got royalty checks, so I think he was happy. We had a '36 Ford flat rack that belonged to my father that we were using over at Golden Arrow, so we put sideboards on it and hauled a truckload every day up to McGill.

RM: You were getting a truckload of sortings every day.

ST: The 3 of us would work and Sonny Neighbors was out there. He was just a young guy.

RM: That would be Roy Neighbors?

ST: Yes. We would sort a truckload - we'd sort, shovel it into wheelbarrows, and throw the waste out, dump it into the truck and do it again. Every evening Don, Starle, or I would drive the truck into McGill.

I was getting kind of bored with the hard work and not much money and I had a chance to go to work in Reno at the Ford Garage for Richardson Lovelock. This was in 1941. I went down to Reno and worked with him for 4 or 5 months. Forrest got three 1937 Ford dump trucks on a trade-in from some construction outfit, and I went over and looked at them and one of them was in pretty good shape. I went to Forrest and told him that my brothers would like to buy one of those trucks, and would he make them a deal on it.

He said, "Sure, have them come down." So Don and Starle drove to Reno to look at these trucks and they selected the one I told them was the best. They went down and talked to Lovelock and he changed his whole story. He wasn't interested. I don't know why.

They left and were very disappointed, and I was absolutely enraged because I had told them to come down. I thought about it for 2 days, and the more I thought about it the madder I got. So I went to work one morning and there was a personal secretary by the name of Ruth Foster. I said, "Ruth, I want to talk to Forrest."

She said, "He's busy."

I said, "I want to talk to Forrest right now." And then I walked right into the office.

He looked up and said, "What can I do for you?"

I said, "I'm quitting."

He said, "Why?"

I said, "You told me you would sell my brothers a dump truck. They came clear down from Tonopah and you wouldn't even talk to them. So, I'm through. You can mail me my check."

We had quite a row, and finally, before I left (I still quit) he said, "Well, bring one of your brothers down and I'll sell you the truck." So we got the truck and then I went back to Clifford and we had a dump truck.

At McGill we had to shovel off the flat rack into little ore cars. You drove up there after a long trip on a dirt [road] and you had to unload it by hand - one guy. Normally it would be about 3:00 in the morning before you'd get done. By then you were tired, so normally you'd drive over towards Ely, sleep in the truck, get something to eat, and drive back to start loading again.

[But now] we had two trucks. We talked to the manager of the smelter and told him we wanted to have an ore bin to dump in. He said, "Fine, you people are shipping us a lot of ore. We'll give you an ore bin and every time it's full, we'll close out the shipment, then we'll process that and send you a check. Then you can start all over again." So that way, instead of getting paid once a month, we were getting paid 2 and 3 times. We'd take the dump truck one day and the next day we'd take the flat rack. We put the sides of the flat rack on hinges so we could drop them and rake it off, and that made it twice as good. We did well.

Well, the war was coming on and we'd all signed up with the selective service and I had a pretty low number. Of course, that didn't mean much, because they were drawn out of a bucket, randomly. But I had a strong

feeling that something was going to happen to me and I wasn't going to like it. I didn't want to go into the army. I figured I'd learned how to walk a good many years before, and I didn't like walking. I loved to walk out in the hills, but I didn't want to walk with a pack on my back. I knew a kid who was in the Navy, Ted Jackson; the Jacksons were out at the Golden Arrow. He'd joined the Coast Guard and he was on leave one time and I got to talking with him. He said, "Why don't you come on down and enlist in the navy?"

"Well," I said, "anything would beat walking through the mud with a 40-pound pack on my back and a rifle on my shoulder." So I went down to San Pedro, where they had a section base, and I talked with the personnel officer about joining the navy. He asked how old I was. I think I was 25 years old. I told him some of my history: high school graduate and handy with my hands.

He said, "Well, we'll give you a physical," so they marched me over to the sick bay and gave me a physical. I sat around and then came back the next morning and he said, "We'll be glad to accept you."

I said, "Well, what will I go in as, a seaman?"

He said, "No, from your background, you're mechanically inclined. Have you done anything else?" he asked.

I told him I had helped my father as a carpenter and helped him do plumbing and that. I'm just naturally handy with my hands. So they marched me in, I raised my right hand, and they swore me in as a . . . no, let me backtrack. They brought in some chiefs from the C. & R. shop (construction and repair) and . . .

RM: Chief petty officers?

ST: Yes, old navy men. They were retired and had been called back in.

One big rough-looking guy came up to me and said, "I understand that you are going to join the navy."

"Yes," I said, "I'm thinking about it, but I would like to get some kind of rate. Even if I go in as 3rd class it's only \$60 a month."

He said, "Well, what can you do?" I told him my story and he said, "Come over to the C. & R. shop with me." So I went over with him and he had all these plumbing things. He picked out some things and said, "What's this?"

I said, "Well, that's a short nipple." He got something else and I said, "That's an elbow. That's a tee and that's a union."

And he said, "We'll take you in as a shipfitter." So we marched back over to where the officer was and he said, "I think this man would work out real good in the C. & R., and I'd like to have him sworn in as a 3rd Class Shipfitter." So I got an instant rate.

Well, I came home. I was fooling around and the woman who was the secretary of the selective service system didn't particularly like me, and I didn't like her, and I had told her before I left I was going down to join the navy. About 3 weeks after I got home, I bumped into her at the post office, and she said, "Well, Solan, what are you doing in Tonopah?"

I said, "Oh, I'm just taking a break from my job."

She said, "Well, I'm going to send you on the next draft."

I said, "You can't do that. I have a new boss and he absolutely assured me that I wouldn't be drafted."

And she said, "Who is your boss?"

I said, "Uncle Sam. I joined the navy October 31st."

RM: In 1941? Right before Pearl Harbor.

ST: Yes. Oh, was she livid with rage. She said, "Well, I have to have

proof."

I said, "Anytime; you just let me know and I'll bring my enlistment papers down to you." And then of course Pearl Harbor came on and I went down and reported in and that was the story of the start of my navy career.

As I probably mentioned before, I had been independent all my life and all of a sudden I wasn't. I always had somebody above me telling me what to do and I didn't appreciate it. The old chief I had talked to who had gotten me into the navy was a 30-year man or something. The navy was desperately looking for officers, and their best resource was the retired chiefs coming back in. So they promoted him to warrant officer and he was no longer in the C. & R. shop. The little chief they put in charge of the plumbing and I didn't get off as friends. Oh, boy. He was on my back and I was yelling all the time. He threatened me with court martial and I had to get out of there.

So I would [always] stop and read the bulletin board to see if there was something coming up, transfers or anything. There on the board one day it said, "Volunteers Wanted." They wanted volunteers for deep-sea diving. I thought, "oh, boy." So I went right to the personnel office and said, "I see the notice on the bulletin board; you want volunteers."

"Yes, we sure do," they said, "we need them bad." I said I'd like to volunteer. "Well," he said, "you look real strong." He sent me over to the doctor's office. I took a physical, passed it with flying colors, and went back and they transferred me out of the C. & R. shop into the diving locker. When the chief found out about it he almost had a stroke, he was so mad.

Chief [Ingram] in the diving locker was a master diver. He had retired after 30-odd years - one of the finest men I've ever known in my

life. So I became a diver. I took all the tests and was qualified as a second class diver. In the meantime, [thanks to] the chief in the C.& R. shop, every time a draft came along to ship someone out, my name was at the head of it. And Chief Ingram ran right down to personnel and had it taken off. As long as I was a shipfitter they were short one man in the shop, because I was in the diving locker and they could only have so many shipfitters. So this guy not only didn't like me, but he wanted to get a new body. It went along that way for about 6 months, and one day Ingram came to me and said, "Terrell, you are going to have to change your rate." He said, "Eventually . . . " I can't remember the little guy's name; he was a miserable little bastard I thought.

I said, "What to?"

He said, "Change it to bosun's mate."

I said, "Well, I don't know anything about being a bosun's mate, but get me the progress test and I'll study up for it." And I did. I was due for an advancement from 3rd to 2nd class, so I went down and took the test, and I think the chief who gave me the test was a buddy of Ingram's, but I passed it. Not only did I change my rate, but they promoted me to bosun's mate, 2nd class, which meant I was making \$75 per month. I had everything then. So I stayed there two years.

RM: Where did you dive?

ST: Everywhere: San Diego to Port Hueneme. Looking for crashed air planes, to recover bodies, repair work on the submarine torpedo nets around San Pedro and Long Beach harbor. Oh, I could talk about that for a month - it was very challenging and very interesting. But the base was changing. They were bringing in minority groups and women and it wasn't, to me, the way it should have been. Maybe I was kind of hard-headed about it, but I

thought the navy was men, so I was getting kind of unhappy with the whole place. I loved diving, I liked the chief in charge of the diving locker, I liked the officers we had, they were all fine men . . . My original officer's name was Walter Luer; he was an ensign. He had transferred to submarine school and for some reason he didn't make it. He was on convoy duty on a repair ship. I wanted to stay in diving, but I wanted to get out of San Pedro. Luer tried to get me transferred to the repair ship, but he couldn't do it. Across the channel, U.S. Steel was building repair ships, and every time I saw one launched I'd run right into the personnel office and put in a transfer to it. I never did make it; they kept putting me on a transfer list, and every time the chief would go down, he would stop it. The chief usually tried to get off on weekends; he had a home in San Pedro. One Saturday morning, a yeoman came in and said, "Who's Terrell in here?"

I said, "I'm Terrell."

"Here's your transfer papers."

"Where for?"

He said, "ATB in San Diego."

RM: What's ATB?

ST: Amphibious Training Base. I said, "This is my chance; the chief is not here." I went down and got all my paperwork completed before he got back on Monday morning. He came in Monday and I said, "Chief, I'm getting transferred."

He said, "No, by God, you're not." I was chief petty officer in the diving group and he said, "No you're not."

I said, "Yes I am."

He said, "I'm going down to see the captain."

I said, "Stay right here, I want to leave. The war is going on 2

years and here I am sitting on my duff in San Pedro; I want to leave. I'm going down to ATB in San Diego and I'll play my cards from there."

So he said, "If that's what you want, but I think you're making a mistake."

"No, I don't think so." I could talk about this forever.

Sixty of us went down to San Diego. We got on the train - they must have taken us to Los Angeles - and they took us over to the ATB. We learned how to read Morse code and semaphors (which I should have known, because I was a bosun's mate first class by then). We spent 6 weeks in training on Coronado Island, living in tents - a horrible place. We were notified that there were 2 drafts coming up and we'd all be shipped out. The drafts came out and there were 2 choices: the Aleutians or somewhere else. I didn't want to go to the Aleutians, so when they pulled the names out, I wasn't on the Aleutian group. We went down and they issued us clothing. We got the tropical clothing and the other guys got the cold-weather clothing, so that was a break.

They formed us into what they called a beach party, B4D. What that stood for, I have no idea. We were B4D-29. They loaded us on trucks, took us over to the naval base and loaded 200 of us on a huge transport ship, the American Legion. We kept asking the crew where are we going and they didn't know. No one knew where they going; the navy didn't know whether they were afoot or on horseback. On a ship that must have had accommodations for 1,000 men, they put us down in the lower deck. Here you were with a hammock, a mattress, blankets and sea bag in a big bundle, plus whatever else you could carry. Every time you came to a bulkhead they had little, small openings in it. They didn't have doors, they had small water-tight openings. I dragged my seabags down the passageways, down the

ladder, down the passageways, until we got down to the lower deck. And they had red battleship linoleum in the passageways. When I finally left over 2 years later, I left my hammock and mattress up at Iroquois Point when I left Pearl Harbor to come back to the states, and still had that red wax on the cloth. I scrubbed it 1000 times and that red wax was still in that. When we had inspections, I got chewed out every time.

The ship left the next morning and we heard we were going to Port Hueneme right up the coast. So we pulled into San Pedro and docked and we just sat there. There were a couple of transports ahead of us and we didn't know what to do. About 2 hours later we got orders to disembark, and they booted us off the ship, which untied and left. And there we stood. The officers, typical naval officers, college graduates and 30-day wonders, didn't know what was going on. Nothing to eat. No one knew. Our officers, in their superior intelligence compared to the enlisted personnel, started talking to the ships, the guys on the gangplanks, the O.D., and they came to one ship and said, "What are you people doing?"

They said, "We're waiting for troops." Gee, a bell and a light went on: troops, that's what we are. He asked where they were going. "We're going to Pearl Harbor."

The officer said, "Well, we're troops."

And the guy said, "I guess you're supposed to belong to us." So they marched us up and we went aboard this transport. The next morning the ship untied and we started for Pearl Harbor. We got to Pearl 4 or 5 days later, and got into the naval base, and they booted us off again. There we stood. Our officers were looking around to see where we were supposed to go and no one knew who we were or what we were doing there. Somewhere once again they made a connection. There was a horrible place right on the beach; I

can't remember the name. They were expecting some troops. A light went on again, so they loaded us on trucks and down we went, but they booted us off there. They figured that we were where we were supposed to be. So when the officers went down to check us in, the officers on the base didn't know what they were talking about; we weren't the troops they were expecting.

So the flurry . . . teletypes or whatever they had in those days started flying back and forth and we were ensconced in these lovely tents on the beach. Three or 4 days later, the word came back that we were supposed to be in Port Hueneme for further training. They were wondering what happened to us. All of our pay records and medical records were in Port Hueneme. The base commander said, "Well, we got you, nothing we can do about it, and we've been told to keep you, but you are not going to draw any pay, and you're going to have to start taking your shots over again." We had already just finished them in San Diego. We were faced with about 17 shots.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ST: I think I had better shorten this. There's nothing worse than an old vet. They love to talk about their experiences.

RM: So you started all over with your shots.

ST: We were going to and by some miracle our records got to us before we had to start taking them. They must have flown the records over on a naval plane. We'd been there about 3 weeks before we even got any money; we were all broke by that time.

RM: So you were living in your tents with nothing to do and no money.

ST: They took us out on marches once in awhile; the officers thought we

ought to be doing something. So we went through a series of training exercises. We were transferred from there to Kawaii back to Pearl Harbor - Iroquois Point - from there to a place called Huimanilla, back to Iroquois Point.

Then we were separated into groups, as I told you, B4Ds; there were 4 B4Ds in the unit, composed of 21 men and 3 officers and one chief. We were told they were going to issue us gear and we were going on an invasion. They issued all this gear and we had to put it on pallets and strap it down and mark it B4D-29 so they could separate it. That took a couple of weeks and they marched us aboard a transport with all of our gear and we left there and went to Eniwetok, Ulithi, the Philippines and then to Okinawa, and that was the invasion of Okinawa.

RM: What was your job? You weren't in diving then?

ST: No; I should explain the purpose of a B4D. We had control of beaches. Yellow Beach 1 was the beach assigned to B4D-29 on Okinawa. We went ashore and set up our control center, which was radio and blinker lights, and the signalman had semaphors. We controlled all traffic from ship to shore. We were given priorities as to what went over our beach. The first thing was personnel, which were troops, then munitions, medical supplies and the 4th was food, 5th was shelter; in that order.

Luckily for the invasion force, they didn't have any opposition on the beaches. They were thoroughly pounded by bombers off the flattops, strafed by the battleships, destroyers and cruisers. They would go along the beaches and fire incredible amounts of ammunition. Then we got off the transport, went down in cargo nets with all the gear on our backs, and went ashore. The first thing we had to do was to dig a dugout in the sand so we could get out of the line of any gunfire. We set up the radios and blinker

lights and everything and that's where we started. We were in Okinawa about 71 days, I think. It was pretty hectic. By then they had secured the whole island except the northern part, Naha. They had a terrible time on what they called Suicide Ridge. It was very well defended by the Japanese, who fought almost to the last man. But by then they had established piers on pontoons out on the ocean, anchored them, and the ships could pull alongside of them and unload on to these big pontoons that trucks could come out on, so they didn't need the beach party anymore.

They put us back aboard a transport and we went from Okinawa to Guam and picked up probably 500 Japanese prisoners. On the way to Guam we were in the bow, and then they moved us to the aft section, and the Japanese were up front where they could be kept under armed guard. We finally got back to Pearl Harbor. A couple of months later we were once again starting to load up for the invasion of one of the main islands of Japan - I can't remember which island - but thanks to old Harry Truman, and the atomic bomb, they brought the war to an immediate end.

RM: What did you think then, as one who was prepared for the invasion of Japan, when they dropped the bomb?

ST: We all thought it was a great idea. We had all of our gear packed on pallets, and they called all these beach parties in and gave us a briefing. We were informed that the army hoped to put 100,000 men ashore the first day and they expected 96 percent casualties.

RM: Oh, my God.

ST: That was the first day. They were going to put 50,000 a day ashore after that. The percentage of casualties dropped, but not very rapidly and not very much. I think at the end of 2 weeks they expected to have over 250,000 men ashore, able to fight. I don't know where they were all going

to come from. That didn't include the casualties.

RM: So if it hadn't have been for Hiroshima and Nagasaki, you stood a good chance of being a casualty.

ST: Well, there would have been a lot of cemeteries. In fact, last April I went down to Beatty, sitting in for Judge Sullivan, and they had some of the protestors who were arrested in Mercury - 3 women and 2 men. They were very nice people and in fact I brought 2 of the women back up whom I sentenced to jail [because they] would have had to wait for a deputy to come down and take them to Tonopah. I talked to them outside the courtroom after I sentenced the 2 ladies to jail and fined the other ones. These 2 had been there before and they had been warned that the next time they would have to go to jail for 10 days. I told them, "You know, you people - I do admire your ideals - but you are going at it wrong." I told them I was in the service, and that what they expected in the way of casualties when we were getting ready to invade Japan. I said, "You know, you people have never been through a war and when they dropped the first bomb in Hiroshima, we were back in Pearl Harbor. The whole island went crazy. The servicemen went absolutely crazy because they knew they weren't going to have to go back out. They all lost friends, they lost part of their families. You people can't visualize. You don't know what carnage is created by an invasion. Our camp was on the road to a cemetery on Okinawa. And those Army 6x6s and the Marine 6x6s would go by day after day loaded with bodies like cordwood, clear up to the top of the siderails." I told these people, "I feel like you do, they have enough atomic bombs, they've tested them enough times, but protesting at Mercury is not going to stop it. You've got to go back to Washington. They are the ones who control everything." I said, "I admire your ideals, but if you've ever been

through a war, you would have thanked old Harry Truman for having the bomb developed and having the guts to drop it. It saved a lot of American lives."

RM: What was their answer to that?

ST: Well, they agreed with me up to a point. And they also agreed that they felt they were at the wrong place and should be back in Washington. What can a worker in Mercury do about stopping it? They can't do anything. The Congress or the president has to do something about it.

To return to Pearl Harbor, we hadn't left yet. We were moved down to a different area and they came out with a point system. You had to have so many points to be eligible for discharge - so many for every month you were in the service. I knew I had far more than enough points, so I went up and put in for my discharge. Pretty soon I was back in the States. We came back on the Saratoga - the first big contingent to come back from the Pacific. They put 3,000 of us in the Saratoga - 1,200 officers - and took every airplane off it and put steel bunks down on the hanger deck. So that's where we slept. They lowered the elevators that the planes went up and down on and built flights of stairs, and I never could understand how that ship was able to feed 4,200 extra people. They still had a pretty good sized crew and they marched us . . . we only ate two meals a day, but they had good food and all you wanted to eat. I still can't believe it.

RM: Those galleys must have been going day and night.

ST: Fresh bread every day. We got to San Francisco and it was real foggy. The Saratoga laid out there waiting for the fog to lift. Later on we found out they wanted to have a big greeting - all the tugs came out blowing their whistles, every ship in the harbor blew their whistles, fire boats were out spraying water and it was quite a deal. We were taken to Alameda

Naval station, booted off the Saratoga, loaded on to a ferry and taken over to Treasure Island where we were booted off; they were always booting us off ships. And there we were, 3,000 of us and things piled all over for a mile. I had 2 sea bags; I had left everything else back in Pearl Harbor. They processed you for going ashore and none of us had any dress blues or anything. We had marine greens and I did have a set of undress blues that I carried in my seabag, with a hole in the seat of the pants, that had been in the bottom of my seabag for 2 years. We went down to get our papers and they were going to let us go for 5 days, and then we had to go down to Camp Shumaker. I told the officers, "I don't have any clothes to go ashore."

He said, "Any of you guys, no matter what, you go ashore. They won't stop you."

"Well," I said, "I had a set of undress blues, but there's a hole in the seat of the pants."

He said, "That's OK; we don't care. Go." So I called my wife up. I was married then to a girl I married before going overseas. She lived in San Jose with my sister, and they drove up and picked me up. I went to San Jose, went to Shumaker and then got discharged.

RM: What did you do then?

ST: I laid around San Jose for about a week, kind of unwinding. When I was overseas I played a lot of poker with the guys, and I had an allotment made out to my wife, and every time I won any money I sent it to her. I figured that I had sent her a couple thousand dollars and that we had a little bit of money in the bank. Because she was working; she was a registered nurse. And I hadn't drawn any pay for about 5 months.

Coming back from Okinawa on the troop transport, for some reason I got a brilliant idea. I went up to the Yontan Airfield, [where] there were a

couple dozen Jap Zeros that had been shot down [with] a pair of tin snips. I cut sections of the aluminum off the wings and once back aboard the transport I had some tools - files, etc. - I don't know where I accumulated this junk. So I started making watch bands out of the Zeros. On one side of the strap, I had Okinawashima stamped with a little punch, and the date, and on the other side . . . we were selling them to the guys on the transport. They were fresh from the States and didn't know what was going on. And they all wanted souvenirs. Well, I had a tommygun that was issued me when I left Pearl Harbor to go out, and I had a Jap rifle that I traded some soldier something for, and I had my .45. I left a Garrand - a little carbine - on my bunk. I sold the tommygun to a sailor for \$65. I sold the Jap rifle for \$55 to one of the sailors wanting a souvenir. Anything I had . . . 3 pairs of binoculars that came off a destroyer that had sunk, and a guy took them off the destroyer before he left. I traded him out of them somehow, and I sold those. Then I started making the bracelets. I would sell them or trade them for watches.

I had so much business I took a partner in - a fellow by the name of Densel Gavit from Texas. I was cutting the bands out and shaping them and he was stamping Okinawashima on them. We were selling them for \$15, \$20 depending on the demand. We couldn't make them fast enough. Guys would come along and wouldn't have any money, but we'd swap a watchband for a watch. We had so much business and so many watches that we took another guy and made him our salesman. He had them on his wrist to clear above his elbow, both arms. When I got back to Pearl Harbor I had almost \$300, and a lot of watches. Gavit had the same amount and the other kid got a commission and we gave him a few watches too. So I didn't draw any pay because the pay line was horrible. My name started with a T, which meant I

was at the end of the line, and there were 2000 or 3000 guys ahead of you. So I had this money in my pocket, playing a little poker and winning a little bit. When I got my transfer chit to come back to the states, I said to hell with it, I'd wait until I got paid off. I had about \$900 pay coming because I was a first class bosun's mate, and I had longevity, and overseas pay.

I had been sending all this money to my wife, so I asked her one day, "How much money do we have in the bank?"

She said, "Oh, we don't have any in the bank."

"What happened to it all?"

"Well, my poor mother needed another room built on her house, so the family got together and built another room."

I said, "Well, who paid for it?"

"Well, we did."

I said, "Who's we? You and I?" And she finally admitted that all the family was working in defense industries and here I was overseas. Oh, God, I got so mad. The more I thought about it, the madder I got. The next morning I packed my suitcase and put everything in a 1940 Ford that I had left with her and went to Tonopah. She said, "Well, what am I going to do?"

I said, "I haven't the slightest idea." I drove down to L.A. to visit with a kid I was buddies with in the Navy, Bill Venable - he was in the diving locker with me in San Pedro. I stopped to visit with Bill and Jane and then I came to Tonopah.

My father had purchased the Tonopah Times and my brother Starle was helping him, so I thought I'd go and help them. I fooled around there for a couple of weeks and I had my belly full of the printing business right

now. A kid I went to school with, Allen Douglass, was in the air force stationed out here at the air base, and he was getting ready to be discharged and there was a service station downtown that was up for lease. It was owned by Tom McCulloch, who had a local clothing store. Red and I talked about it and went down and took a lease on it. We were there 8 or 9 months and were barely making a living. We were doing a lot of mechanical work. And Red and I had worked for Forrest Lovelock before the war.

Forrest had an employee running the Ford Garage, and the employee wanted to move to Carson City. Forrest didn't know what to do; he liked Red, didn't particularly like me, but I was the lesser of the two evils.

RM: Because of the confrontation [you described earlier].

ST: So Allen and I made a deal with Lovelock to buy the Ford Agency in late '45. We didn't know anything about running a garage except that we were both mechanically inclined. We talked it over and decided to do it. No money down, and Forrest would bankroll the operation for a period of time and do all the bookwork. We had to count the money and deposit it and have a daily receipt on everything that went on. It sounded like a good deal for us so we took it over, where Joey's service station is now - Joe Maslach. We started up pretty well, getting a few cars. You could sell cars; you could have sold anything that had four wheels on it. We did a lot of mechanical work because there was a lot of mechanical work that had to be done; all the cars were old. We had a fellow in the body shop and 3 mechanics including myself. We were doing pretty good business and also selling a little bit of gas. Grease jobs and tire repairs, everything. We went along until about 1949. I was running the garage and Red was taking care of the parts, and for some reason or another we got into a conflict, though we are still very good friends after all these years. A fellow came

up from Richmond from the Ford Motor Company, one of the nicest men I've ever met. He had a long talk with us one night and said, "Maybe I shouldn't tell you boys this, but Lovelock is ripping you off, to put it quite bluntly."

"What do you mean?" I said.

He said, "You won't live long enough to pay for this place." Part of the net was going to pay off the garage. He said, "You'll be 100 years old and you still won't own it." Lovelock was too sharp with a pencil for me; I liked Forrest, but I didn't trust him.

So I told Red, "I think I'm going to get out of this, I don't like the Deacon." (Everyone called him the Deacon; kind of a preacher type. Loud, and he was never wrong.) I said, "I don't trust the Deacon and I'm going to get out." I thought then we both should get out.

Red said, "No, I'll go down and talk to Forrest."

He went to Reno and talked to Forrest and he came back and I said, "Well, have you made up your mind?" He told me he was going to stay. I told him I wanted out. So I got my share, which was very small after working almost 5 years. I got paid a salary but for the hours . . . This was in 1950, because I bought a 1950 Ford when I finally got out in the middle of the summer. Then I got married to Sue Tanner. I had gone with her before the war when we were young.

RM: Meanwhile, you had gotten a divorce from the gal you married?

ST: I didn't have a divorce yet. But we started going together off and on a little bit, not too serious. Then I started to get real serious about it because I just said, "I went with her before the war," and I thought, "Well, I'd better do something about the wife I had." She had come to Tonopah and stayed for a couple of months one time, and then left. She

took my 1940 Ford with her.

RM: Did you get it back?

ST: I called up Geri (her name was Geraldine) and I told her, "I'm going to get a divorce."

And she said, "Oh?"

I said, "Yeah, 'oh.'" She asked me what was I going to do. I said, "Well, you've got my '40 Ford, so you pay me a fair price for it, or I'll get another car and bring it down to you and we'll trade."

And she said, "Well, I need a car." I told her I would buy her a car and make sure it was in good shape, so I bought a used Plymouth and overhauled the engine. It had good tires on it, and I met her in Sacramento and we traded cars.

Then I got to thinking more and more about getting a divorce, so I went over to Goldfield. In those days the D.A. could practice private law. [I saw] old Pete Breen and told him I wanted a divorce and gave him all the information. He said, "How come you come over here?" I told him I didn't particularly like the [Nye county] D.A., Billy Crowell. I'd been elected county commissioner for 4 years, during this period.

What had gotten me disliking him was that Lee Henderson, who was a commissioner, and who I was going to run against, and Billy Crowell, and Naismith were all real good friends. Before I decided to run I went down and talked to Lee and said, "I understand that you are not going to run for commissioner again." I told him I was going to go up and file.

CHAPTER NINE

ST: I decided to run for commissioner and I was working for a friend named Jack Hall, who ran the Shell Oil Company, and he and I would talk politics and he convinced me, without much urging, to run for county commissioner.

After I quit at the Ford Garage, I had gone to work for Jack Hall delivering oil and diesel oil and gasoline. Jack was born in Tonopah, I think. So as I said, I talked to Lee Henderson and he told me he wasn't going to run. I told him I was going to file and he said, "Fine. I'll help you." I went up and filed and about 4 or 5 days later a fellow by the name of Horace Campbell, Jr., filed against me. He owned the foundry and he and Lee were great friends. And I'd heard that Lee had talked Campbell into running against me.

RM: Did you run as a Democrat?

ST: No, a Republican. My father was Republican. That's the way it was in those days. And even then, I believed in the Republican ideal that private enterprise should not be controlled by the government. I still believe it today. Anyway, I also heard that Billy Crowell, the D.A., was involved in this decision. I went down and talked to Lee, and I mean, I yelled at him. I told him what I had heard, and he didn't deny it. "Well, Lee," I said, "I'll tell you something. If I'm elected county commissioner you'll regret ever having Campbell file against me."

He said, "What do you mean?" I told him that as long as I'm on the Board of County Commissioners he won't get a nickel's worth of business and you won't either, and Walter Naismith won't sell one policy to the county. So the very next day Campbell went up and withdrew. I had an opponent by the name of Wallace Bird in the primary and I beat him. Then I had one opponent, Bob Williams, in the election. Bob had horses and he became a barber. I beat him in the general election. So I was a commissioner for 4

years.

RM: Were you elected at large in the county?

ST: Yes. And what a county to cover. Lord. I must have walked 5,000 miles and was bitten 20 times by dogs. But I did enjoy it.

RM: Did you have more than one term?

ST: No, I was beat.

RM: Was this in the early '50s?

ST: It would have to be the early '50s because my oldest boy is 32, and he wasn't born when . . . We'd been out to the fluorspar and I think we'd had the tungsten by then.

RM: And meanwhile you'd gotten a divorce.

ST: Yes, I went over to Goldfield and the D.A. Pete Breen, who eventually became judge, was my attorney. The district judge's name was Judge Hatton. In fact, the big stone house that Ralph Pillers lives in was Judge Hatton's. He was a fine little man. I got a divorce and Sue and I were going together and we finally got married.

RM: Let's take a little detour here and describe what Tonopah was like when you got back after the war.

ST: Well, Tonopah Air Base had been started in 1941, and the town was pretty much full of construction workers. Each month, more and more moved in because they were building quite a strip out there. They built a complete camp before it was over with. And the town was really jumping. I came home on a week's leave, about a year after I went into the service, and I couldn't believe the town. It was wall to wall with army air force soldiers. I was absolutely shocked when I got into Tonopah. You'd go into a joint, and if you got within 3 feet of the bar, you were lucky. The town was just jumping up and down. I came home again before I went overseas,

and it was twice as bad then. Allen Douglas was out at the air base and he took me out there on a tour of the base, and when I left, they were working on the air strip, but when I got back 2 years later, it seemed to me the whole valley was full of . . . we always called them Airdales, and buildings, and airplanes. I couldn't believe my eyes. My future wife, Sue, worked out there; They ran buses out there. I don't think Tonopah saw anything like it before or since; I think the boom days were nothing compared to that. They had 7,000 men out there. There wasn't a single woman in town who didn't have 7 guys hanging on her. Lord.

I felt like a sore thumb walking around in my navy uniform; the only swabbie in town. When the war ended, of course, they were discharging people right and left and the base went down very rapidly. They ended up with a small crew and finally buttoned it up and Tonopah got very quiet. It was a terrible shock to the places, all of a sudden from to bust. They started selling off the buildings and so forth out there.

RM: Would people move them in?

ST: Yes. They dismantled and moved - sold - the hangars. They left 4 or 5. One of them burned down, and a couple . . . there are 3 left, I think. One's owned by some fellow in California and I think the county owns one up where the FAA has their tower. There were 7 or 8 altogether. To me, they were huge, but compared to the ones they build now they weren't much.

RM: Still, it must have been a trick to build them; those are wooden beams.

ST: I guess they built them right out there. Trucks were coming in here and the railroad [brought] in trainloads of material.

RM: The trains were still coming in from the north?

ST: Yes, down from Reno. It was a booming town. About a year after the

war ended they kept phasing it out and finally just shut it down and moved everything out.

Then later on, the air force - it had become the air force - built that encampment that's up there now, behind the football field, and they had radar stations here. They built that road up there and after they built it, they found out that it wasn't the highest mountain in the area, so they went and built the other one. Very intelligent. They used this one just long enough to get the other one built. They had quite a few service men here. Most of them were technical people; radar operators. They finally pulled out and the FAA took it over.

RM: After you got married you worked delivering gas for awhile, and then you got into mining, you said.

ST: Yes; the fluorspar property at Water Canyon and later on the tungsten property up by Blue Eagle.

RM: Could you tell us a little bit about the fluorspar?

ST: The property was found originally by Frank May, a prospector. When I was at the Ford Garage I had bought an army reconnaissance vehicle from the railroad. They shut down and had 2 of them and I bought one. I overhauled it and put new tires on it, and I grubstaked Frank May off and on. He was crazy as a loon, and I don't know if he would know a mine if he fell down one, but he'd bring back 2 tons of rock, all sizes, shapes and colors, and wanted me to have them all assayed. And I said, "Frank, there's no way in the world to know what all these are and where they come from." So we split partners real quick on that. Anyway, he'd found the fluorspar and took in a partner named Eddie Clark.

RM: Where was the property?

ST: Water Canyon. You go out to Warm Springs on U.S. 6 60 miles and take

the road that goes down to Alamo. You go past Twin Springs through that little pass and go up towards Blue Eagle. It's about 7 miles from the turnoff up Water Canyon. We had that and were trying to develop it. We thought we had it sold one time but didn't, and in the meantime my brother Starle would prospect. He found the tungsten, which is up north of Troy, between Troy and Blue Eagle. [It's the] same range of mountains, except that it has a different name up there. We worked out at this tungsten property for quite awhile.

I came back to town and [by this time] my parents had died. My father died first, quite suddenly. He died in this house, which has been in the family since 1945. My mother was living here and she got ill, so I came back to town. My wife and I had a little one-bedroom house that she had bought during the war where the Sears store is now. My mother got worse and worse so I came up here and stayed. I slept on the couch in the livingroom. She finally died, right here in this house. She left me the house. My brother Don had been married to a woman named Pauline and my other brother was married and had three girls. So I ended up with the house and my 2 brothers ended up with the newspaper, which my father had been running. I didn't want anything to do with the newspaper business, so I ended up with the house. I was working [a number of] jobs.

ME: I remember you were working at the Ford Garage one summer.

ST: I was working there when my mother was ill. Red hired me before she died. Anyway, I ended up with this house. I tried to sell it, but you couldn't sell anything here in Tonopah. I wanted \$1,500 for it. I had a couple of people look at it and offer me \$500 and I said, "I'll burn it to the ground before I will give it away." Sue and I got talking about it and we decided to go ahead and start working on it and then move up there,

because it had 3 bedrooms actually. She said, "Well, we're going to have to do something with this house, and there's not too much we can do to it." In the meantime, I had acquired a building out at the Tonopah Air Base. I tore it down and brought the lumber into town and started rebuilding this house. I lowered the ceilings and rebuilt everything and we finally moved up here. Then I went down and I was working on [the little] house, too. I was going to build another bedroom on it so it would be easier to rent. I moved the front wall out in the living room, which made it about 6 feet longer. Before I could get the stupid thing done, it burned to the ground. Luckily, it was insured.

We started to acquire property around town. I was working as a carpenter, odd-jobbing, and the first place we bought was owned by a widow named Mildred Ryan. She had 4 little houses on 3 lots behind the Ford Garage. My wife had saved quite a bit of money during the war - she had bought war bonds and that. She said she wanted to buy it, and I tried to talk her out of it, but she said she wanted it, so she bought that. We rented all these places for \$15 or \$20 a month. And it wasn't long before she had her money back.

I read an ad in the Tonopah Times about a bunch of government houses for sale down in San Diego, so I thought I'd call and see what it was all about. I called up and got hold of a woman in the government agency that was selling them and she said, "Well, we have 7,000 houses down here." They were all flat tops, they had been built in the middle west somewhere and they weren't nailed together. They were built in 4x6-foot panels and they were screwed together with wood screws. She said, "There are people here that will dismantle it for \$150. And the only thing you have to cut are the floors." The floors were built in sections. One section, and then

they had a slot running down that sat over a beam, and the other section. That's the only thing you had to cut.

I went down and talked to Red [Douglas] about it. He had a better car and I told him that it sounds pretty interesting. "You can buy these houses for about \$300 apiece. Two-bedroom houses, with a kitchen stove in them, hot water heaters."

He said, "By gosh." So we went down there. He and I didn't have any money. He was working pretty hard; times were tough.

We went down and we couldn't believe our eyes. The whole area was nothing but these houses. Some were 2-story, some were single story, some were duplexes, some were 4-plexes. We had quite a talk about it and talked to a guy who would tear them down. Now we had a problem: how are we going to get them to Tonopah? Red said, "Let's go back to Tonopah and see what we can do about that. Let's talk to Curtis Cline," because Curtis had a trucking outfit and a big semi. We came back and told Curtis our plan. Times were tough for Curtis and he was looking for work.

I think Curtis and I went down and looked at them, and we saw one that was dismantled. He looked at it and said, "I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll haul them for \$150 a house." That meant \$150 to haul them, \$150 to tear them down, and \$270 for a 2-bedroom. Sounded like a pretty good deal to me; you could get them laid down in Tonopah for about \$600. So we came back home and I said, "I'll let you know in a day or two."

I talked to Red and told him what Curtis wanted and talked to Sue. She had the money in the bank. We bought 3 each. We both bought 2 2-bedroom, and 1 1-bedroom. I don't know why we bought the 1-bedroom; maybe money wise. We went down and picked them out and paid for them and we had 2 months to remove them. We went over and talked to the guy who would tear

them down and told him we wanted 2 torn down at a time. Two at once, 2 again, and then 2 again. But we had to keep them separate because I owned 3 and Red owned 3.

We made that deal and came up and got hold of Curtis and the fellow called me and told me that he had 2 of the houses down. Curtis told me he could only haul one of those houses at a time. I told him that we should go down. Curtis was quite a hard working guy. We went down and stacked 2 of those houses on the trailer. And he said, "I think I'm illegal. Overweight and too high." There was a checkpoint that we had to go through. So we got it all loaded but . . . we won't leave here until dark. When we get to the checkpoint, let's hope and pray it's closed." It was. So we got 2 houses a trip and he made \$300 a trip.

We hauled mine first, and I stacked them up somewhere. Each house was marked and luckily they were all different colors inside and outside. We marked all the panels, 1, 2, 3, 4, around the outside. Then we marked the interior: we'd put B-R for bedroom and so forth. The roof panels were marked differently, too. They were 4 feet wide and about 16 feet long. Curtis got 2 of those houses on the truck and Red had a pickup. I'd haul back the kitchen cabinets and the stoves, sinks, bathtubs, etc. So we got them all to Tonopah. In the meantime, I'd started tearing down those Ryan houses that Sue had bought.

RM: They were not in very good shape, then?

ST: Oh, terrible. One was an adobe house. I was renting it to Fred Ketten, who was just a kid. I had to get a skip loader and a truck to tear it down. The 1x12s on the roof had about 4 inches of dirt, and it had sheet iron over that. So I just mucked that out. Then I tore down the cabin behind and gave part of it to the guy across the street, and he moved

it over there and so I didn't have much to tear down, just scrap lumber. I wasn't working anywhere and I had to concentrate upon these houses. The first one I built was the one I just finished rebuilding again. I got it all done and had an air force man and his wife and kid who wanted to move in there. I still get Christmas cards from them; they were the first tenants I had.

I got them moved in and started on the one behind it, where the adobe house had been. I got it up and was working on the inside and one day there was a knock on the door, and a man came in and asked me if I was Solan Terrell. He said he was from the state contractor's board. "I want to see you contractor's license."

I said "I don't have a license."

He said, "You have to have a license." I asked why. Never had one before in my life. "If you are going to rent this property, you're going to have to have a license," he said. Then a light went off in my head. I told him I wasn't going to rent it. He asked what I was going to do with it and I told him I was going to move into it. He said, "You are not either." I told him not to tell me what I'm going to do with my own house. I told him to get out of the goddamn door, get out of my house. He said, "I'll be back." He left and I thought, "oh, boy."

In the meantime I had worked for some contractors; the fellow who was building the high school up here. The man who had the paint contracting job as a sub of the prime contractor was named Al Solari; a fine man. When this guy left, I thought, "Al's on the Contractor's Board. I had better get ahold of Al and [find out] how to go about getting a contractor's license." Things were easier in those days, I'll assure you.

I called up Al and talked to him and he said, "I'll send you an

application. You fill it out and mail it back to us." So I filled it out and put in for a general contractor's license with a \$30,000 limit or something. You didn't have to take a test or anything and I got my license. That's how I became a contractor. Well, I got that house done and rented and I put the 3rd one up. It's closest to the street that runs north and south. It was a one-bedroom house. I rented it. Later on I added 2 more bedrooms and it made a nice house. That's how I got into the rental business.

CHAPTER TEN

ST: That's how I became a contractor. I did quite a few small jobs that I could handle and wouldn't have to hire anybody. If I had to hire someone, it was one of my brothers because I could work with them. We didn't have to be talking all the time, we could be working.

RM: What kind of jobs did you do?

ST: Oh, I did one in Fish Lake Valley, put new ceilings and rebuilt the bathrooms in a school. My brother Don and I did that. I really didn't bid that many jobs; when you bid a job to remodel old houses, you're asking for trouble. I usually worked by the hour, and they bought the material, and it worked out better for me. A contractor has to overbid these old houses to start with to cover himself and if he lucks out, he makes money; if he doesn't, he makes wages. So I figured it would be easier to make wages and give the owner a fair break on the wages. I always was a good worker, so I had plenty of work.

Then I started buying little houses. I bought the house up behind me and rebuilt it. It was a horrible, 4-room house and I rebuilt it

completely and added a utility room. Then I bought another house and had to rebuild it completely inside.

I was up in Ogden visiting Sue's sister and brother-in-law. He was telling me about an outfit in Ogden that sold pre-built houses, something like the ones in San Diego. I went down to talk to them and they had a very good operation. I told them that I might be interested in a duplex and they got all the different pictures out and told me more or less what the price would be, so I said, "Well, I'm going back to Tonopah and if I can get a lot, I might want to buy one." We came back and I owned a house down below the school and the county owned three lots, I believe right across the street, so I went up and approached the county commissioners and I bought them dirt cheap; \$150 a lot. We had been looking at the brochures we brought back from Ogden and decided to buy this one particular duplex: \$7,000 for the shell and partitions with nothing finished inside. The partitions were framed and everything, but they did furnish the kitchen cabinets and a stove, and the bathtub, and I think a little vanity for the bathroom. But you had to buy everything else - the plumbing and wiring, the sheet rock and insulation, everything.

We had the money, so we bought one and had the lot leveled off. They had sent me the plans for the foundation. I went ahead and built the foundation, poured the footings. It was the first time I'd ever laid block in my life, so I laid the stem walls up two courses, I think. I should have gone up three, but that's neither here nor there. Then the building arrived. I hired a fellow in town to help me and also my brother Don. I never did pay my brother a nickel for doing any work, except when we were working on a contract. We started putting the floor up and there were little kids going to school, and they stopped and watched us for a minute.

We got the floor done and we started standing up the walls and in 3 days we had the walls, the floor, and the roof on - 3 days. And every little kid who went by would stop and say, "It's just like magic." I got it up and got the shingles on the roof and then I went to work up at the school as a carpenter.

They were building a shop and a music room and the gymnasium.

RM: Was this in the '60s?

ST: Yes. I went to work up there as a carpenter and worked on the duplex at nights and on weekends. I got the east side done and a family moved in, and then, holding down a job, I started on the west side. When I got the west side done, I figured, as far as materials went, I might have had \$15,000 or less in it. I rented the west side to Foote Minerals before it was done. The boss came up and talked to me. They had looked at the other side and he told me he'd like to rent the other side. I can't remember what I got for them. Rents were cheap then. "I don't know whether there will be anyone living in it," he told me, "but we want it in case one of our employees have kids in high school." So they rented it for a year and no one ever moved in. Every month I got a check. They finally wrote and told me that they decided that it wasn't worth keeping it, because some of the families were too big to move into that house, so they'd have to rent a house anyway. Then I rented it to other people, and it was rented up until the day I sold it. I ended up with 9 rentals and I have only 3 left. After my wife died, I started selling them. If she hadn't died, I probably would be accumulating them yet.

RM: What made you start to sell after she passed away?

ST: Well, 14 or 15 years ago the local justice of the peace, Tom McCullough, died. I was going to Reno to visit my brother Don in the

hospital there; he was dying. I told Sue that we should go down and visit Don because according to his son, he wasn't going to last much longer. So we went, and I had purchased the local paper that day, the Tonopah Times, and I read an article in there that they were looking for qualified people to apply for J.P. They would be appointed by the county commissioners. I never had gotten along with the county commissioners they had then. I was fighting with them over something all the time, and I was telling everyone who would listen that they were a bunch of bums. Some of them were real good friends, but I thought they were lousy commissioners. We got all ready to go, packed up and I said, "You know, I'm going to apply for that job."

Sue said, "Do you think you have a chance?"

I said, "Oh, no, they'd never appoint me." So I sat down and I wrote: Board of Nye County Commissioners, Gentlemen: I hereby apply for the position of Justice of the Peace, Tonopah Township, signed my name.

Sue said, "Aren't you going to tell them your qualifications?"

I said, "I don't have any qualifications to be a judge, except I'm over 21. Besides, they know me, they won't give me the job. But I'm going to do it to spite them." We left town and I put it in the mail. We were in Reno I think 3 days to visit my brother and nephew. When we came back and came in the front door, the phone was ringing. I picked up the phone and it was Mickey Brawley. I said, "Hi Mickey, what's going on?"

She said, "Congratulations."

I said, "What did I do, win the Irish Sweepstakes or something?" I had forgotten I had even applied for the job.

She said, "You are the new J.P." I thought she was kidding me. She said, "No, you are the unanimous choice of the board of county

commissioners."

I said, "You've got to be putting me on."

"No," she said, "they want you up to the courthouse as soon as you get back in town." That's how I got the job.

RM: Who were the commissioners then?

ST: Bob Cornell, Andy Eason and - was it Bob Ruud? I got along with Bob Ruud because we were fellow Republicans, but the other two were Democrats; I was always fighting with them. Bob Cornell is still alive and lives in Gabbs and Andy died a couple of years ago.

RM: Could we back up a little bit? Tell me the kinds of problems you faced with renting property. I've rented property before and I've always come out on the short end. You get stiffed and they trash the place.

ST: I think the first requirement is to have good rentable property, even if you have to do a lot of work to get them. To do that you can't hire it done, you have to be able to do it yourself. I think rentals are a wonderful business if you just have 2 to 5 and you can do the work yourself. You can't hire somebody. You have to be a carpenter, a plumber, an electrician, a painter. You have to be everything. That's how I've made money at it.

RM: What did you do about people trashing your place and skipping out on the rent?

ST: I've never had anybody trash a place, believe it or not. I've been beat out of rent 3 times. I rented the house behind me to 2 colored families with no children. The men were in the air force. They got transferred and they owed me some rent. I think they went back to Nellis. They were nice people and before they left one of the wives came down and told me they were getting transferred and they knew they owed me a month's

rent and they would send me the money. She said, "I won't be able to send it to you the first couple of paydays, but we'll send you a payment."

And I thought, "Well, here I go again. I'm going to get stung." And 3 weeks later I got a money order for \$15 and a note saying they would send more. They paid about half of it and I wrote them a letter and said, "Forget the difference, just consider it a gift." It wasn't that much money. Not that I'm rich and didn't need it, but not as badly as they did. And they were doing what they told me they'd do.

I had a guy move out and never did get any money out of him. I went through Arizona one time and stopped and looked him up and told him what I thought of him, but I never got any money out of him.

There was another family; they moved out and I felt awfully sorry for the woman. Her husband was a jerk and every time I'd see her, she would have these two little kids following her. I'd bump into her down at Coleman's. My wife was sick and I was doing the shopping. She'd come over and talk to me. She'd tell me that she was still hoping to "pay you that rent we owe you."

So I was in Coleman's one time, a couple of weeks before Christmas, and I really felt sorry for her. [I said], "I want to do something for you right now, for you and the kids. I'm giving you a Christmas present; you don't pay the rent. But not for that lousy husband of yours, I'm giving it to you and the children."

RM: Maybe it's the small town. Maybe people get beat more in big cities.

ST: If you are an absentee landlord, you're going to get beat. I did really well in real estate.

RM: Meanwhile, in about 1951, they started nuclear testing on the Test Site. Actually, they had established Nellis in World War II, and it came

up this way, didn't it?

ST: I can't remember the boundaries. Of course, they had the Tonopah Air Base so I would assume that they had acquired a large section of land between Vegas and Tonopah.

RM: Was Tonopah a part of, or an extension of, Nellis? The bombing and gunnery range?

ST: Yes, and it took in the next valley which now is the Tonopah Test Range because they used to have targets out there. When I first went to work for Reeco out there when we built the original CP, there were 4 or 6 original towers with those buildings on top. They had a bombing range and a gunnery range in that area so they must have taken [land] clear over to the Kawich. It would be west of 95, that road going to Vegas. Clear to the Kawiches.

RM: A little south of Silver Bow. What do you remember about the atmospheric testing? What did you think of it?

ST: Well, to be honest, I didn't give it any thought. We used to go out to Salisbury Wash, where you had a straight view right down to Mercury, and watch the bombs go off. You couldn't see the actual site where they went off, but you could see the big ball come up and it was like daylight for seconds.

RM: They would do it at dawn, wouldn't they?

ST: Yes, usually early in the morning. In Nevada, you normally don't have the winds then; they come up in the afternoon. I was going down to Pahrump and Beatty one morning. It was in the fall because I was running for re-election, and I was between Goldfield and Beatty when they set one off. For a second, I didn't know what happened. It was dark, driving with headlights, and then daylight. I stopped and then you could see a huge

column go up and a great big, God-awful fireball. Horrible looking thing. Beautiful, it was really beautiful. Frightening, but beautiful.

RM: We used to watch it at Reveille. They would announce that there might be a shot the next morning and we'd get up and watch it.

ST: I don't think anybody could visualize the amount of power in one of those little, little bombs. You know, they talk about a million tons of TNT . . . That's more than all the bombs we dropped.

RM: It's inconceivable.

ST: I often think back about when we were in Okinawa and the God-awful fire power of all the battleships out there. There were 3,000 ships in the invasion force, and about one-third of those were fighting ships. The Americans lost about 70 destroyers off Okinawa. The Japs were bombing the island every night. They never did it in the daytime because we would shoot them down, but at night they'd come over with bombers and drop them helter-skelter. They were dropping 500 pound bombs, 1,000 pound bombs and they made your hair stand on end. And here's a thing that has a million tons going off at once. I couldn't believe it. They've got thousands upon thousands of the stupid things.

RM: We've got 30,000 and the Russians have 30,000.

ST: Oh, that's just wonderful. They ought to build a few more, they really need them. When one bomb will wipe out a whole city. One little small bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

RM: So it didn't really impact you that much up here, just occasionally sighting it.

ST: Well, once in awhile we'd get up and go out and watch it. Pretty soon, poof, it would be daylight. 100 miles away. Daylight. It's hard to visualize that much power, and I don't know how big the bombs are, not as

big as a boxcar. They can haul them in an airplane.

RM: Well, they can put 15 of them on the head of a rocket. The ones on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were about 3 times the size of your TV there. I've seen models of them.

ST: Is that all? Good God. What an awesome weapon! I think man is determined to wipe out man. Maybe this new Russian leader . . . he might be playing with a pretty honest deck.

RM: I kind of think he is.

ST: I think he is frightened.

RM: I think he realizes that they can't continue to spend their money on this.

ST: They are bankrupt; in worse shape than we are. I was talking to someone today and said that when I was a kid I could visualize a million dollars, just barely. I could write it on a piece of paper and here's all those zeros and that one in front of it. A figure that was astronomical when you were making \$4 a day, or \$3.50 a day. Then later on they got up to hundred million or two hundred million, then they got up to a billion and I have kind of a hard time figuring all those zeros behind a number. I can't visualize what a trillion is. What's beyond that? What's the next figure?

RM: I don't know.

ST: I never heard about a trillion, until they ran out of billions. They buy businesses now for \$4.5 or \$6 billion. If I had had \$6 billion in 1930, I could have bought the whole damn United States. Now that's pocket money. They talk billions like we would peanuts. When I was first out of high school, I often thought, "If I'll ever reach a point in my life where I could make \$500 a month. I'll be a big shot!" I was taking home \$60 a

month, \$18 a week, 6 days. With \$500 a month, I would be probably the governor of the state of Nevada. I couldn't visualize anybody making that kind of money. Now they make \$500 a week and are in just a fair job. Just like you can go out and make beds at the Test Range . . .

RM: You've just got an average income. In America.

ST: It's beyond comprehension. That's the reason people won't even pick pennies up off the street. I do. I see a penny . . . I never walk by a coin. A penny is a penny.

RM: I have jars and jars of the things.

ST: I used to have a couple of jars. I took out all the Lincoln heads and saved them. I must have a couple, 300 of them. I don't know why. They're still worth just one cent. I thought that maybe in 50 or 60 years my grandchildren could get a nickel apiece for them. I pick up pennies. The old saying is, you watch the pennies and the dollars take care of themselves.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

RM: I thought we might say something about your career as a commissioner of Nye County.

ST: Well, I talked briefly last night about how I ran for office and was elected. But to go into it a little more deeply, when I was county commissioner, Bill Beko was the district attorney. Steve Baliette was on the board and he was younger than I. Wallace Bird was on the board the first 2 years. There wasn't any money for anything and we had to watch pennies; oh Lord, it was tough. Bill Beko and I talk about this still.

We had a sheriff named Bill Thomas, and he'd been sheriff for 30

years. A fine fellow and very honest. He was driving an old Plymouth station wagon, and it was absolutely worn out, and he only had one deputy for Tonopah. Bill needed a new car. We asked around and the cheapest one we could find was a Ford from the Midland Garage. Allen Douglas gave us a price on one with a police package - heavier springs and heavier seats; made to last longer. And we did not have the money to buy it. It was almost \$1800. But we had to buy him a police car; he needed it.

So we got all the county elected officials in - the recorder-auditor-treasurer (they were combined), the assessor and the sheriff and district attorney, and we got all their budgets out and stole money from everybody. We just told them we had to have the money, and we would worry about it towards the end of the budget year, but we had to have this almost \$2000. They cried and I don't blame them because they were running short. That's how we bought him a car. The way they buy cars now, they buy 5 or 6 at a time at \$12,000 to \$14,000 apiece. It's hard to believe that a county as big as Nye County didn't have any money, but there wasn't anything.

The people in Manhattan had an old water line that had been installed maybe 40 or 50 years before, and it had reached a point where they weren't getting any water of it; the pipes were all rusted out. Danny and Rose Daniels were living in Manhattan and he had a bar out there. Danny was kind of outspoken, hardworking and blunt. Kind of a heavy drinker too, but he was a nice guy. He came in and talked to us about the water line. The Manhattan Town Fund had something like \$300 in it. We told him we didn't have any money to build a water line from the water tank clear down through town. That was quite a distance, and there weren't that many people out there, but they needed a new water line. We said, "Let us think about it and maybe we can figure out something." We talked among ourselves, and

with Bill Beko. I'm almost certain it was Bill who came up with the idea; I know it wasn't me.

Jim Perkins had run and was still in charge of the mine at Northumberland. The mill had been dismantled, but there was a 4-inch steel water line out there and we approached Jim Perkins about buying it. He said, "Well, I don't know what kind of shape it's in; most of it is on the surface. Go out and look at it and come back and talk to me about it." Steve Baliette and Jimmy Boni, who was the road foreman, went out with us. In case we had to dig up something later on we wanted to have everyone look at it. And it looked like we'd have almost enough pipe without digging. In Nevada, hardly anything rusts on the surface and it had been wrapped with tar, so the only rust would be on the inside. Danny Daniels and Rose Daniels had this bar, so we came back and talked to Perkins. We asked him how much he wanted for the pipe and told him what it was for. "I won't charge you anything," he said. You go out and dig all the pipe you need that will run from the water tank down through town. You're welcome to it." He also said, "You have to go out and get it."

So we thought it was a good idea. We talked to Jim Boni about taking the county backhoe and going out and digging the ditch through town. Danny Daniels came into town with George Rong, and 2 or 3 other guys, some of them welders. We told them we'd buy the pipes to come off the main line, and one valve for each house. We'd buy the welding rods and if they needed acetylene we'd pay for that. The road department went out to Northumberland and cut these pipes up into 30- or 40-foot lengths and hauled them to Manhattan. They took out their backhoe and dug the ditch. Through community effort, in a few months, they had a brand new water line. That's been 30-some years ago. Once again, there was no money, [but there was]

thinking, ingenuity, and the work of the people who needed it. Probably the same water line today would cost you a couple hundred thousand dollars.

We had to involve the people in the area in everything we did because there just wasn't any money. It was quite an experience, it really was. We needed a jail and a little courthouse down in Beatty desperately and we had somebody draw up a rough sketch and set of plans for it. The closest bid we got to build it was around \$16,000 to \$17,000 but Beatty didn't have any money. There was a fellow living here in town named Harold Long - he still lives here - who works at the school district. He was a carpenter and plumber, everything; a real hard-working man. We talked to Harold about it and he said, "I can't bid on it because I don't have a license, but I'll build it for labor. You buy the material and I'll charge you so much for labor." I think he did all the concrete work and laid all the block, he did all the carpenter work and everything. We built it for \$7000 and they're still using it. Some of the local people helped. I think somebody donated some equipment to level the land. It was another time when the citizens wanted something, and some of them would help. Those were the things that made the job interesting. Now all they have to do is say, "How much money do you want?" and they do it.

RM: Was there anything happening in Pahrump at this time?

ST: They were just starting to grow a little bit. There were not many people down there, and the ones who were there were scattered from one end of the valley to the other. They were always asking for roads. Well, Nye County is large. We had a crew in Beatty, and a man and blade in Pahrump and the ones who were working out by themselves would either tow the truck behind the patrol or park it and make one pass up the road, and then come back to the truck. Then they'd hook the truck to the patrol and drive up

to the next area and start all over again. People in Pahrump - I really don't think they've changed all that much - thought that that was the only spot in the world that should be getting anything. We never had any money to do anything.

That's one of the things that beat me in the election. I went down with the road foreman, Jim Boni, and got into an awful shouting match with some of the residents who wanted their road built and graveled. It was 2 miles out there. The guy threatened to go to the governor, and I said, "I don't care who you go to, or where you go, when you come back you had better bring money." Promises. Anybody can make promises, but you can't deliver. And when I ran for re-election, I don't think I got one vote from Pahrump.

RM: Who did you run against?

ST: I think it was Andy Eason. I think he promised them everything. He got elected and was county commissioner for a long time. He was a good commissioner.

RM: There was nothing in the Amargosa either, was there? Just a little bit in Ash Meadows, and that was it.

ST: The only thing in Amargosa was one little kind of a dug-out gas station at Lathrop Wells. A fellow from Tonopah, for some reason, went down and bought the damn thing. His name was Ambrose Monti. I think he kept it for a couple of years and finally someone came along and bought it from him. And he left; there was nothing out there.

RM: Is there any way you can zero in on the dates when you were commissioner?

ST: It was in the early '50s.

RM: Was the Mercury Test Site going then?

ST: Yes. But it was nothing compared to what it is now. There wasn't anything at the Tonopah Test Site.

RM: What satisfactions did you get out of being commissioner, and did you enjoy the position?

ST: I did like it, and I still think I was a good commissioner. I wouldn't let political pressure or threats bother me. I never was very easy to threaten. Instead of telling people what they wanted to hear, and then letting them squawk about it a little bit, I would say "yes" or "no." So it was frustrating that way. I wouldn't be a county commissioner now if they paid me \$5000 a month.

RM: Too many frustrations?

ST: Pressure blocks.

RM: Do you think, given the Bullfrog situation, that the state legislature will come in with a vindictive approach against Nye County next time?

ST: I don't think so. I think that it was the stupidest bill that was ever passed by the state legislature since Nevada became a state. I still can't believe that those people had the nerve to introduce it, and they passed it, and our governor signed it.

RM: It is unbelievable.

ST: Absolutely. And the sad part about it was that the governor always told everybody he was against the repository, but they sent the message to Washington that Nevada wants it - they want to get hold of that tax money. Talk about a fiasco!

RM: How do you feel about the Yucca Mountain repository?

ST: I don't care one way or the other, because what I think will not have any affect upon what they do in Washington. I can march 5 million people back there to complain about it and if they want to put it there, they will

put it there. You know how the government operates. Here's Nevada, one of the 50 states with 2 senators and 2 representatives. Who's going to pay attention to what Nevada wants? It's a godawful large state and there's nothing in it. They have been using that lousy area down there for testing atomic bombs and it's not worth doodily poop anyway anymore. It never will be worth anything. So they might as well go ahead and dig a big hole and start burying the stuff. What are the governor and the legislature going to do about it? There's nothing they can do about it. They own the damn country already, the government does. They are all-powerful back in Washington.

RM: What impact did you see on Tonopah once they started all the activity out on the range out here? I'm a little unclear exactly when that did start. I know my dad and I worked out there in '59, but . . .

ST: I went to work out there when they built the original CP and Generator Shop. They had to haul water from wells a long way off. It's been 35 years ago, at least; about 1952 or 1953. I got to know some of the Sandia personnel real well. My wife and I square-danced with a lot of them and they weren't being mouthy, but at the time the life expectancy of the Tonopah Test Range was about 5 years. They had some tests they wanted to make. I have no idea how important they were - a lot of them involved aerial drops and also small rockets with a range of 4 to 10 miles.

Once they completed that testing program, they were going to walk off and leave it. Well, Sandia was down in Albuquerque at White Sands Testing Grounds. So they came to Tonopah and built the original CP and had a big diesel generator and they built a series of towers around, those large metal pipes that had the cameras on them, so they could photograph these rockets and aerial drops. About 3 or 4 years [into the program] they had a

testing site down in Dalhart, Texas. The Dalhart area was building up so they had to move out, and they moved part of the stuff to Tonopah. Next, they had a testing site at Salton Sea that they were using. They were shooting small rockets out over the Salton Sea. They had to move out again, because that area was building up. So they came to Tonopah from there. Every time they moved, they had to build something else; another building. Then they thought, well, they would move to Johnson Islands; a lot of room there. A lot of ocean, and nobody around to look at them out in the middle of the Pacific. The Johnson Islands were between Hawaii and Eniwetok, I think. I know the Navy had a landing strip on it. People I had known had flown transports over there. So they went down there and were there about 6 months, but the cost turned out to be prohibitive.

So they came back to Tonopah and they have been growing ever since. I don't know what their short-range plans are but it's a sad fact of life that the military is getting bigger and bigger every year, and they need more and more sophisticated equipment. And part of Sandia's job was to test all this stuff, so they're out there, and I guess they'll be out there until the military change their mind and go somewhere else. But where are they going to go?

RM: Have you seen a growing impact economically from them?

ST: During this strike [by union employees at the Test Site during the fall of 1987] we can see that it has really hurt the town; a lot of people work out there from Tonopah. If you go down to the restaurants and service stations and you go up to the Station House, they're almost empty. I don't know how they are surviving. A lot of the husbands have left their families here and gone somewhere else to look for work.

Of course, Sandia, or the Tonopah Test Range, has been quite an

economic boost for the town. It's been steady money coming into town and it's gradually grown. Most of the workers have come out of Tonopah, but now a lot are from Las Vegas, because it's too big for the town to furnish enough workers. I think if they had better shopping and better affordable housing, a lot of the people would move up from Las Vegas and stay here. Some of them have. They have sold their homes and moved up. And then, a lot of them just don't want to live up here. So the husband drives or flies up here every week, which is quite an expense.

It's kind of sad that we aren't getting the full benefit like Vegas is getting out of Mercury. I think Tonopah would probably have 400 new families in town, at least. They fly a lot of them in, some of the higher echelon people that work for Ford Aerospace, Reeco and Sandia. All the Sandia personnel live in Vegas. They had a housing project up here and got into some kind of a squabble with the county and they said, "Goodbye Tonopah," and they left. They flew those workers up every day in a big airplane. The government has got a lot of money. The pilot and co-pilot would sit there until the shift was in and then fly back to Vegas. That's what you call using your head to save money. Especially after spending a quarter million dollars building housing out here. Very intelligent.

RM: I think it was on Tape 5 that we talked about how you originally became justice of the peace. Do you want to talk about your career as a J.P.?

ST: After I was appointed, I went down to where Judge McCullough had his office, where the Senior Center is now. It was a big room with a partition across the back. There was a desk in the other room. I don't know what Tom ever did back there.

CHAPTER TWELVE

ST: Well, I went down here the first morning. It was, at that time, a part-time job. I can't remember what they were paying me . . . \$200 a month, something like that, and there was hardly anything going on. So I went down and I sat down behind the desk and thought, "What the hell am I doing here? What do I know about being a judge?" I was working part-time doing contracting work around town, carpenter's work, mainly. I'd go down and there was a girl working for me part time, to take care of the books. Most of it was traffic violations.

One of the requirements under the Nevada Revised Statutes, which regulate the justice courts, [is that a new J.P. must go to] the first school that's available to him. I was appointed in November of 1972 and I had to go to this school, and I had no idea what it was going to be about. I put my name in through the court system, and I was sent down to the University of Nevada and then it was called the Judicial College. There were judges there from all over the world. It hadn't been in business very long, but it had a good reputation.

They had a special course for lower court judges who weren't lawyers. And even if you were a lawyer, you had to go to it. So I went down and went to the first meeting. The dean of the school always gave a talk on the first day. We had to register on a Sunday and classes started the next morning. He talked about the school and what they hoped to accomplish by training judges to be better judges. I didn't know really what I was going to do there, but I knew from years of experience that if you are talking you're not learning anything, so if you kept your mouth shut and your ears open and listened to people who had been judges for awhile, you might pick

up something.

I was there 2 weeks and came home on the weekend. The only time I said anything was to greet people. If something came up and I was interested in it and I thought I might need it, I would collar the judge who seemed to me to do the most sensible talking and ask him questions. Most judges love to talk about themselves so I had no problem getting them to explain things to me. They were telling me how smart they were by talking to me. I learned more in that 2 weeks than . . . I still can't believe it. A lot of it went into my head and didn't do much, but every once in awhile something would come up and I remembered a guy telling me something, and I could go to my manual and look it up.

I hadn't been a judge for 2 weeks and there was a man charged with murder. And I thought, "What am I going to do; I've never had a trial." This young man was from California and he'd gone out to Ellendale. He liked to walk about the desert looking for Indian artifacts. Usually he had a little boy he took with him; his son. The boy would get tired, so the father would say, "Now you stay right here and I'll be wandering here, and do not leave that rock. You sit right here, you have water and Daddy will be back." And the guy would disappear from view, walk around and maybe be gone for half an hour or an hour. The little boy would wait for him. He had done this the year before once or twice and he did it once this summer one time, and the boy never did leave the area. So he felt quite confident about going off and leaving the boy. The man was stupid. He went out one day, he and the little boy, and he was out looking for arrowheads and rocks that might be interesting to him. I think he kind of visualized himself as a prospector, I don't know. Anyway, he put the little boy in a certain spot and came back about an hour later, and the boy

was gone. He kind of panicked and started to run around yelling, looking for the kid.

Finally, after a couple of hours, he really got worried and came to town to the sheriff's office. They had a search and rescue outfit and they took the deputies and went out and finally found this little boy and he was dead. It was from dehydration and everything. I think it happened fairly early in the morning, on a real hot day in the summer. The kid hadn't taken water with him or anything, maybe he just ran around like crazy and got worse. Anyway, when they finally found him, he was dead. So they charged him with murder.

And I didn't know what to do. We had a preliminary hearing for it, to see if there was probable cause that an offense had been committed and that this man committed it. I heard all the evidence and I came to one conclusion, that the father was still heartbroken, the whole family was torn up. And here the man is charged with murder, of his own son. I didn't know too much about the law, but I felt that the only thing the man was guilty of was stupidity and I told them in open court, I said, "I don't believe that the man is guilty of murder, he's guilty of stupidity, the worst type of stupidity. I'm not going to bind him over for trial." The D.A. got very angry.

RM: The D.A. wanted to bind him over?

ST: Yes. We had quite an argument about it later and I said, "You think about it for awhile. I am sure that you'll come to the same conclusion I did. The man didn't deliberately go out . . . "

He said, "Of course he didn't, but he is still guilty of murder."

I said, "No, he's guilty of stupidity." I talked to the family afterwards and they were very relieved of course. I'll bet that father has

thought about that a million times.

RM: He has had his punishment.

ST: That's what I thought, too. More than his share. So that was the start of my judicial career. Since then, I've been to the college 15 times. I have a plaque from the Supreme Court congratulating me for completing these courses; I'm very proud of it. When I got my plaque, there had only been 2 other judges who had completed the 15 courses. Judge Drew in Goldfield was one, and I can't remember who the other one was. I've enjoyed them all. I should be going again, but I can't find anything that I feel will be interesting to me. There's no sense going down and sitting through something boring . . . I've had some very good courses there, some I took because I thought I was going to need them. I took a course in computers and the only thing I learned from that course was that I wouldn't know how to run a computer if the county bought me one. My mind is just not geared to them. But it's been a wonderful experience and people . . . in fact I had a guy ask me today, "When are you going to retire?"

I said, "Well, I still have 3 years to go on my term. If I feel healthy, I'm 71 now, and going on 72. If my health is good and if my . . . I've told Louise that if she ever thinks that I'm getting a little senile, to please tell me so I wouldn't run again." But . . .

RM: Why don't you describe a little about what the duties of the justice of the peace are, in a jurisdiction in Nevada.

ST: Well, the justice court is the lowest court in the system in Nevada. There's the justice court, and the district court, then the supreme court. We have no levels in between. We handle everything except divorces. We do civil work, but it's a small amount; small claims. But we handle

misdemeanors. A person can be fined up to \$1,000, up to 6 months in the county jail, or both. Gross misdemeanors and felonies are not settled in my court. They ought to change that law. A gross misdemeanor can be fined up to \$1,000, but they can be put in jail for up to a year and my court doesn't handle anything beyond 6 months. But for a gross misdemeanor and a felony, which means prison, we have what we call a preliminary examination, where the state comes in with a case. And they don't have to prove in justice court what they have to prove in district court. In justice court all they have to prove is that a crime was committed, and probably the guy who is accused committed it - probable cause. You can bind anybody over to district court on probable cause. And felonies are also entitled to a preliminary examination. So if, after the preliminary hearing, I decide that probably this guy committed this crime, he is bound over. We have small claims which are up to \$1,500, and usually one person sues another and there are no lawyers involved. It's one of the biggest pains in the small court system. And every legislature raises the amount.

RM: Are they frivolous, or what?

STY: Some are. Sometimes you just can't make a decision. There's Jim on one side and Jack on the other. There's no paperwork. No one has anything except "I said this, and he said that." And then the other guy says, "I didn't say that. He didn't say that, I said that." I tell them to go out in the lobby and argue it out.

RM: Is that right. You don't make a decision.

ST: How can you? I tell them, "If I believe you, I'm calling him a liar. And, both of your stories are plausible. You people are just stupid, you don't get anything in writing." I don't settle a lot of them at all. Then for a long time we were coroners. That's a job I didn't particularly

enjoy, but legislature had saddled the J.P.s with it.

RM: Did the coroner have to establish the cause of death?

ST: Yes.

RM: How did you do that?

ST: Well, if it was an open and shut case that somebody had been stabbed or shot, or something, it was no problem. The victim was sent for an autopsy and we'd go by that. Normally, if somebody was charged with it, it was settled that way. Now the sheriff is the coroner, but we still have to have the coroner's inquest. Since the sheriff is always the first one at the scene they should be coroner, but we have to hold the inquest, which involves a jury of three people. The state calls the witnesses up, and the jury can ask them questions. I can ask questions sitting as the presiding judge at an inquest. This way, you more or less get down to the facts. If the jury feels that it was an accident, or deliberate, then they so rule. If they say that the man was killed by a gunshot fired by Jack Smith, Jack goes to trial. I've been awfully careful about picking juries.

Prior to my becoming J.P., the J.P. would go down to a bar and pick out 3 guys. Or he might call up 2 or 3 guys he'd met before and say come on down. Which was real haphazard. When I became a judge, I'd known what had been going on in Tonopah for a good many years, in fact in a lot of small towns, and I made up my mind that I was going to try and pick jurors who had an open mind and were fairly intelligent. Not somebody who had sloshed a few beers down them before they showed up. It's worked out real well.

A couple of times, I don't think the D.A. was too happy with the results of the Coroner's Jury, but I always felt that it was a fair verdict. But you can't please everybody. You give it your best shot, and

hope that you're doing the best you can and they are doing the best they can. I have had some good jurors. They ask a lot of questions. I don't want a jury to just sit there and nod their heads; that doesn't accomplish anything. I don't feel that just because a D.A. charges somebody the person's automatically guilty. Maybe in some of these detective books [that happens], but not in real life. I would say that of everything I've done in my life, and that's pretty varied, this is the most interesting job I could ever hope to have fallen into. It's a challenge, and I'm not a stupid person - I think I have average intelligence - but I do read a lot. I've always read a lot, and I think I have been a good judge. I was appointed, so I had to run the very next election, and I had 5 people file against me. I got more votes in the primary than the whole 5 got together. Then I ended up with one opponent, Sandy Spicer, and he was telling me he was going to beat me. I told him he had better wait until they count the votes before he looked around for a robe. I went to bed early that night, and then went down the next morning to look at the results. They posted them down at the Tonopah Times on a blackboard. He was standing out there shaking his head. He never ran again.

RM: Do you run in Tonopah only?

ST: My township includes Tonopah, as far east as the county line at Curreant Creek, Duckwater, all that area, Blue Eagle over to Warm Springs, the valley that Warm Springs is in, Manhattan, Round Mountain, Smoky Valley. Luckily I don't have the Indian Reservation at Gabbs. It's a big township. At times I feel that it's almost too big, because the people who live at Curreant Creek could drive 70 miles or less and be in Ely. And they have to drive clear to Tonopah for everything. Luckily they don't have that many problems out there. The only problems they have are the Railroad

Valley Improvement Association trying to collect from people on their TV.

RM: Well, how has being a judge changed your view of life and of humanity? Or has it changed?

ST: Oh, yes. It's changed. The sad thing about it, in the judicial system, most of the people you meet are people charged with crimes. And we don't have real nice people just come up to visit.

RM: You see the seamy side.

ST: They have reason to be up there. They are either charged with something or they want to charge somebody, they want to sue somebody, they have problems. Now we have the last legislature, 2 years ago - domestic violence. Restraining orders. Very rarely do you see people come in there that you're glad to see.

In fact, my clerk . . . I have a clerk named Susan Lieseke. Her husband is a sergeant with the Nye County Sheriff's Department. He's a good officer, and she is a fine person; I love her. But, she'll look out the door and she will see somebody coming, and she'll say, "Oh God!" I'll look over and I'll think . . . lots of times I'll go out the back door over to the sheriff's office and I'll tell her to tell that person that I'm not there. Oh, you can't believe some of the nuts.

And I like people, but I've reached a point where I think everybody's crazy. I signed a search warrant yesterday. There was a gold mine up out of Lovelock. They had 4 gold bullion bars that they had cast. At the end of the shift, everyone goes to town, and they had left these 4 bars in what they figured was a safe place, I guess it was a pretty well-constructed building, and they locked these bars in it worth almost \$100,000. Well, they went to work the next morning, and they found that someone had gone down through the roof, and had stolen these 4 bars. The sheriff up there

and they radioed Beatty and told them to be on the lookout for this guy in this car. And they stopped the guy. He was also wanted for parole violation for one thing, and they wanted to search his car. He wouldn't let them search it. They were hoping that the other gold bars would be in there.

And I went out to the airport and the sheriff flew in. The judge in Beatty was gone so I was the acting J.P. so I read the affidavit and it was kind of amusing reading about these stupid people. They had the guy in Beatty already, so the sheriff flew down, and I don't know whether he found anything or not, but he was sure he would find drugs.

You know, a person with any intelligence wouldn't go back to the town a few miles away and try to sell gold bars. They weighed almost 8 pounds apiece. No one walks around with an 8 pound gold bar in his pocket. Well, the hock shop had bought gold from this guy before, but in small amounts. You would have thought that a bell would have gone off in his head. He should have called the police immediately, as soon as the guy left. He wouldn't be out \$6,000, either.

RM: Yes, that's right. He's out that money, isn't he?

ST: My heart bleeds for him.

RM: Well, it doesn't sound like it's given you kind of a negative view of humanity. It's just more of an appreciation of some people's lack of intelligence.

ST: 99 percent of it is stupidity, alcohol, or drugs, or a combination of all three. This is what really upsets me because I like people, like to talk to people. I don't care whether they're black, white or yellow, if they're short, fat, tall, or thin, I don't care, I like people. If they treat me like a human, I do the same. I reached the point where . . . and

my clerk, I was telling her the other day, "You know, you are getting almost as bad as I am. Used to be a lovely girl, and now all of a sudden you see someone come in that door and you cringe." In the district court system, they are not involved in this stuff.

RM: In the petty stuff?

ST: Not at all. The only time they ever see a crook is when he's sitting in the courtroom and the judge is on the bench. But people stop me when I go down and have coffee. Or when I go out to eat, they'll come over and say, "Can I talk with you for a minute?" They call me on the phone, day and night. You are father confessor and no matter what you tell them, they don't do it anyway.

RM: What are they asking, advice?

ST: Mostly advice.

RM: About how to handle a problem?

ST: Yes. And, I'm not a lawyer, I can't give them legal advice. And I'll tell them, "Well, I can't give you legal advice but I know what I would do . . . In your position, I would do this." They will say "thank you" and maybe they will go out and do it.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

RM: Has being in the judicial end of law enforcement changed your view of law enforcement, specifically how the police do their job?

ST: Well, I think I'm a little prejudiced. The police department that I work with mainly has been in Nye County. I have been involved in Esmeralda County, as I have sat over there as a J.P. in Hawthorne. The quality of the officers in the rural areas of the sheriff's department, in my

estimation, is not very good. They do things that are unbelievable, not because they are mean or anything, but because they are not trained. To be a good police officer, you should know what you can't do legally.

The same officers will do the same things over and over again, through ignorance, and a lot of cases are thrown out. I went to Gabbs on a drug trial of a young fellow they rightfully suspected of dealing drugs there. The local deputy sheriff out there had heard that this fellow had gone to Reno, and he correctly surmised that the fellow had gone to Reno to buy some drugs, mainly marijuana, to sell around town. He didn't work and always had a few dollars on him. And maybe I shouldn't say it, but he was a long-haired, hippie type. Of course, to a police officer, if you have hair below your ears you're a hippie. If you are a hippie, you are no good and a crook. The deputy went down and parked on the road to Gabbs from Fallon and pretty soon this guy came along. It was dark. The cop pulled him over, and to begin with he didn't have probable cause for a stop. He went up to the car and said, "Get out of the car."

The young fellow got out and said, "What are you stopping me for?"

He said, "You don't have to know why I'm stopping you. I'm stopping you because I want to search your car."

He then said, "No, you are not going to search my car."

The officer said, "Well, you are going to stand right here until I can radio Nye County (the judge had died out there, Judge McGovern) until I can get a search warrant out here."

And the kid looked around. It was dark and he didn't want to stand there for two hours, so he said, "Go ahead and search the car." Of course, they found marijuana in the trunk. The D.A. talked to the officer without reading the reports, filed the felony charge against this fellow for

possession of controlled substance. I went out to Gabbs to sit on the trial, and this deputy was going through what he had done. The D.A. was sitting there, and the lawyer for the defense; no one had questioned why he had been stopped. The deputy said exactly what he told the kid. The lawyer for the defense didn't question him too much and I thought, "I'm not very bright, but, first there was no probable cause for the stop, and no one asked the deputy, was this guy under arrest? Did he place him under arrest?" So, when they got through questioning the deputy, the D.A. said he had no more questions. The defense also had no more questions.

I said, "Well, I have a few questions I want to ask." Which is my prerogative. Because the role of a judge is to get at the truth of the matter, whether a crime was committed or not, and whether the guy did it or not. The first question I asked the officer was "What was your probable cause for the stop?"

Well, he said, "I was waiting for him to come in. I knew he had gone to Reno, and was assuming he would bring back drugs."

I said, "Had he broken any law, was he speeding, or tail lights or anything?"

He said, "Oh, no, I just stopped him."

I said, "Now when the man got out of the car, did you request that you search the car and he said no?"

"That's right" the officer said.

"And you told him that he was going to stand right there until you could get a search warrant?"

He said, "That's right."

I asked the officer if this man was under arrest.

He said, "No."

"Suppose he had said to you, 'Well, I'm leaving.' Could he have left?"

"No, he couldn't have left."

I said, "Then he was under arrest." I think the law then was the longest they could detain you was 12 minutes. It's changed to 30 minutes now. And I said, "You tell me he wasn't under arrest, but you also tell me that man could not have fled the scene."

The officer said, "You bet he couldn't have." No matter how you word it, he was under arrest.

I said, "Case dismissed."

The D.A. got pretty snotty about it. I said, "Do you mean to tell me you'd have the balls to take this guy in front of Judge Beko, after what the deputy told me? In court on record? That he had no reason to stop the vehicle, and that he was going to keep him there 2 hours, and then he said he wasn't under arrest? You can file an information with Judge Beko and get it back on if you have the guts to do it, but if you do, you're a damn fool." The guy was guilty. Hell, the officer could have thought of any reason for the stop. Something like, "He weaved a little bit and I thought he was drunk" . . . anything. They do that all the time.

RM: Are drugs a problem?

ST: I never heard of marijuana the first 4 or 5 years I was judge. But there's a lot of it going on in town. I don't think there are any real hard drugs, [but] lots of marijuana.

RM: No cocaine or heroine.

ST: I don't think so - maybe a little, but no one could afford to buy it. I heard there's some crack around town, and derivatives of different types of drugs. The only ones I've had have been paraphernalia and marijuana.

RM: Do you see marijuana as a problem in terms of public order and so

forth?

ST: I think the problem is there is only one guy selling it and 10 people smoking it. I really don't have any problem with a person smoking it, any more than I have with a person going out and getting drunk. I don't know which is worse. Alcohol is a much worse problem. If they could eliminate alcohol, I think my docket would drop 50 percent at least.

RM: Is that right. 50 percent of your docket is alcohol related?

ST: Yes.

RM: What are some of them?

ST: Guys beating each other up in bars, drunk driving, spousal battery. There's quite a bit of spouse abuse. Not really so much in Tonopah; a lot of my cases come from Manhattan and Round Mountain.

RM: What do you attribute it to?

ST: Alcohol. 99 times out of 100, it's alcohol. Alcohol is readily available and it's cheap. You can buy it anywhere and it's legal. For some reason, the average American male thinks that when he marries a woman, he owns her. He can do whatever he wants with her. He can beat her up any time he wants. I have one case in town . . . this individual is Hispanic. He's a waiter. He's a legal alien I think, from Mexico. He beat up his wife one night and was arrested. She posted bail for him. The D.A. decided not to go on it, so I refunded his money. Then he was arrested about a week later for the same thing and his wife came up and posted bail for him again. I think they raised the ante then to \$300, because he had been charged before. His wife refuses to testify against him. So the D.A. said, again, "We are not going to proceed on it."

I know the guy's employer. I said, "I'm going to resolve this problem, then." In my own way. I wrote out a check for the bail to the

guy, and went down and gave it to his boss. I told the boss that I wanted him to give his employer some advice. I said, "I'm going to advise the Nye County Sheriff's Department that if he beats up his wife again, his bail is to be set at \$5,000 or \$10,000. She won't be able to bail him out, and you tell him that I will guarantee that he's going to spend at least 6 months in the county jail. If he wants to beat up his wife, he'd better pack his suitcase and go back to Mexico." That's been 7 or 8 months ago and when I go down there to eat, boy, I get the VIP treatment. And he hasn't beat her up. I told the boss to tell this guy that's one thing that I don't approve of. If he wants to beat up his wife, he won't be serving tables at the restaurant, it'll be in the cell block.

RM: What about child abuse? Do you see much of that?

ST: Fortunately, I don't have too much to do with juvenile work. I think I've only had one or two. What child abuse do you mean, sexual or . . . ?

RM: Both, I guess.

ST: There have been some instances where it has been suspected and has been investigated. One in Gabbs. They sent the man to prison, that I know. I think I've had 2 cases. It's almost impossible, when you get a little kid on the witness stand, to get anything out of them. They are frightened with the surroundings.

RM: Plus they are testifying against their parents. That's a tough thing.

ST: Yes, it's a real problem. Is it a kid telling something or is it something he has been told to say? I know there are a lot of arguments pro and con about it, that a kid can have something suggested to him and it becomes a fact to him. It's a very serious charge I think, because perhaps the person did it and perhaps he didn't. I don't know how anybody could determine it for a fact. I had a kid one time, about 7 years old, a girl,

and she was an excellent witness. The D.A. acted like he was walking on eggs. It's hard to use phrases to a little kid who wouldn't understand. But she was a good witness, very smart. She would think about a question before answering it. No hemming and hawing or anything. I believed her, I really did. I know that the person who was charged was bound over to the district court and I think he went to prison. She was a smart little girl. Most kids are absolutely tongue-tied. Almost frozen.

Some adults get the same way. A funny thing about the lower court system, the last time I read about it, is that 92 or 93 percent of the crime in the U.S. starts and ends in the justice court system. The upper court judges are isolated from everything. They don't do anything until somebody is arrested and bound over for trial. Of course, they get more and more civil work, which they hate with a passion - lawsuits.

RM: Well, everyone is suing someone.

ST: That's the name of the game now - sue the bastard. That's all they think about. But they're isolated from all that. We're the shock troops, the front line . . .

Some of the things that go through the system are unbelievable. A lot of them should never have gone to trial, I think. I had a preliminary hearing yesterday, and the guy is charged with 5 counts - a simple robbery that happened down to Joey's Service Station. It was night, a father and son and a girlfriend. They parked out by the 2 doors that went to the grease rack, and the kid came out and asked what they wanted, and they said they needed a couple of quarts of oil. They raised the hood and the son walked around the building and went in and stole the money out of the till and came back out, paid for the oil, and drove off. The bill was \$4, and the boy gave the kid a \$5 [bill] and a tip so he didn't have to make

change.

The kid had written out a statement the night they were arrested; what they testified in court to was very different from what he said. I questioned him before he testified to assure myself that he hadn't been coerced into this, because he wasn't required to testify unless he wanted to, unless his lawyer is present.

When it was over I bound the old man over on the 5 counts. It looks to me like the D.A. is using a shotgun approach to this matter. But I'm going to bind him over and let the district judge worry about it. I said I would also like to have the district attorney take a look at the son, and charge him with perjury. He lied. It's a fact that if you are called in and told to write a complete statement as to what took place, it will be closer to the truth. I told the kid, "Gee, it's kind of funny that you said one thing on the statement and now you're saying something just the opposite."

He said, "Well, I've been thinking about it and what I wrote down wasn't true." He should be charged. He's an ex-con, and the father, too.

RM: Solan, Nevada has a very high rate of people behind bars, incarcerated. I think it's the highest in the U.S. Why do you think that is? Do you see anything in your court that might account for that?

ST: In my opinion there are 2 reasons for it. First we have a large transient population. A lot of them are coming from California to Reno and then Las Vegas, or going back. Second is the gambling. I really believe that the gambling and the alcohol have affected almost everybody in prison. Almost everyone who ends up in my jail is a transient, been here for 3 days, 3 weeks, 3 months.

RM: You were just a kid when gambling was legalized in Nevada. Do you

think the state is better off with gambling?

ST: Financially, in some ways. I know the gambling joints are better off, by hundreds of millions of dollars every year.

RM: Would the state be better off not to have gambling and the kinds of laws that it does on divorce and so on? Obviously Vegas and Reno would be little tiny towns . . .

ST: Vegas would still be a whistle-stop on the railroad. I think we'd be better off without it. I think gambling is just like alcohol, you become addicted to it. Look at Las Vegas, for a good example. Look at the joints they have; these joints are not what you call small, something they built for \$200,000,000. Two, 3, and 4 hundred million dollars. Three thousand rooms or more. Why do those people stay in those rooms? They didn't come here to see the desert, they came down to see all that money they are going to win. They come into town with an \$8,000 Volkswagon and they leave town on a \$65,000 bus. And they had to borrow the money for their ticket. We all would like to make some easy money and the only ways you can do it are gambling where it's legal, or you go out and steal it. The average guy doesn't make any money through hard work, he makes a living, but he's not going to be driving a Rolls Royce.

RM: Would you want to say a little bit about the community organizations that you know about in Tonopah?

ST: Tonopah has a good Chamber of Commerce. They have a lot of members. Most of the members are not active, but they have a good, hard core in the chamber. They work hard, and of course the chamber works hard to better the community. The Elks Lodge has been a good lodge in Tonopah. The Masons has always been a good steady organization. And then there is the Rotary Club. That's composed of businessmen, more or less; you could

almost compare it to the Chamber of Commerce. They're pretty active. And there are sportsmen's organizations.

When I was younger, we had the 20-30 Club. You had to be between the ages of 20 and 30. It was one of the most honest groups I ever belonged to. It was organized for one thing, and that was to have a good time. We had a hell of a time. Then most of us grew older and the younger people, for some reason, didn't want to join, so they disbanded and became the Lion's Club. And it has been very active, too.

RM: The Lion's Club grew out of the 20-30 Club?

ST: In fact, when I went to the first Lion's Club meeting, I thought I was back in the 20-30 Club, except we all had gotten older. It's a good organization. And there is the Veteran's of course. I belong to the Elks. A friend of mine who was an Elk for years talked me into joining and I've been an Elk now for 30 years, but I haven't been to a meeting in 27 years.

Another friend of mine talked me into joining the Vets. I admire the veterans in a lot of ways, because I am a vet. I went to the first meeting and I was inducted, or whatever the devil they call it, and when they started saluting everybody and calling everybody commander, I asked myself, "What in the hell am I doing here?" I had enough of that in the service, so I've never been back. I pay my dues. They are all a good bunch of guys, but standing there saying, "yes commander, no commander" and saluting, oh God. We parted physical company, but financially I'm still part of the organization. I've had a lot of guys tell me, "Now, I'm going to get you going back to the meetings if it's my last act on earth.

I say, "It will be. You'll be in a coffin and I'll be attending your funeral."

RM: Over the years in Tonopah, it seems there are certain people who have

stayed on and a lot who have left. What is it that makes for a hard-core, stayer-on in a town?

ST: At the start of the Depression, when the mines were closing, a lot of them had been here for years, and were forced to leave. Economics. They went to other towns, looking for work in other mines. Lot of them went down to Grass Valley and Nevada City. A lot of people disliked the town. They worked for the county or they worked for the state, or they had a business or they were mining. That's the reason most of them stay here. A lot of the people who were in business in Tonopah left and never came back. They never spent a nickel in Tonopah.

The only exception to that whole group is Leroy David. He has a contracting business. I don't know how much money he's made in Tonopah through a lot of hard work, and he left temporarily, moved to Los Angeles, and before long he was back. He built a home here and he's one of the few people who prospered by living in Tonopah. He's built a lot of buildings in town - the original bowling alley, a restaurant, a joint and a lot of houses in town.

RM: Why did most people leave?

ST: They went to Vegas or Reno so they could make more. They more or less harvested the crop in Tonopah and figured that they could get a bigger profit in Vegas or Reno.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

RM: Do you have any more thoughts on people staying in or leaving Tonopah?

ST: I think a lot of people left for economic reasons, and I think a lot left when they went into the service and just never came back. Quite a few

of the younger people went to the universities and never came back. If I went to the university and wanted to be a bookkeeper, a CPA, there's no real place for a CPA in Tonopah. So there are a lot of reasons for not coming back, especially for the ones who got an education.

I left when I went into the service, and I was never going to come back, but I never was happy with large numbers of people around me, and that's all I had for 4 years, so I couldn't wait to get back. I have no intentions of leaving. The town has been good to me in a lot of ways. It's also been hard at times. If you want to work, you can always do something; you don't have to get in the breadline. It's just a matter of how determined you are, or how hard you want to work. Most of the people who have spent their whole lives here and will tell you the same thing - the town's been good to me. Even through the hard times it was good to people. A lot of retired people moved here. Maybe they had visited Tonopah, and some are people who were stationed out at the air base during the war. They liked the open area and being able to fish and hunt without standing in line to get to a creek. I like the freedom of the area. It's due to the BLM and the Forest Service that it is gradually getting eroded, but it's not as bad as in lots of places. I can leave my house, walk for 5 minutes and sit down and probably won't see anyone for 2 days.

I like small towns. My wife was married to a man in the military and she did a lot of traveling - they were stationed in Germany and France and England - and she loves this area. It's kind of isolated and yet it's not. The shopping is not the best in the world, but as we always say, it's only 250 miles to Reno or Vegas. Distances don't mean anything to people here.

There are a lot of things I'd like to see change in Tonopah. I'd like to see it grow a little bit gradually. We've had the Test Site out here

bring a lot of good people to town. I think our school system is pretty good. Not the best in the world, but schools are not perfect anywhere in the United States.

RM: It's a good, clean environment for kids here, I think.

ST: Yes. You don't have to worry about gangs and you don't have to worry about drugs much. And if a kid's going to try and buy some beer, they have to look pretty old to be able to buy it because most of the people who sell it are careful because they can lose their license. They can always find someone to buy it for them, you can do that anywhere.

RM: They all are going to experiment with those things. Actually, you want them to, so they get some experience with it.

ST: We used to go down to dances and watch these guys come out and get their bottle and as soon as they went back in, we'd steal their bottles. We used to go down and buy a quart of wine from a bootlegger and he had 2 or 3 different kinds. He wasn't stupid but we'd say, "What kind you got?" He'd tell us. We'd say, "Let us have a little glass of it." He'd pour a little glass, maybe an ounce in it. We'd say, no we didn't like that kind. How about the other one. We'd try all the different kinds, and then you'd buy a quart for 75 cents. Dago red or something. Oh, Lord. Terrible wine. The Serbians all made wine and grappa. The ones who really enjoyed it would get gallon jars and fill it full of maraschino cherries, canned cherries and alcohol and let it sit there, and then of course you could almost get drunk on the cherries.

They had a lot of fun. Serbian Christmas - what parties they used to put on! An open house with big feasts on the table. Even during the Depression there were whole roasted pigs and the women are all wonderful cooks. We had a lot of fun. I don't regret any of it.

RM: How do you see the future of the town?

ST: [long sigh] I think the future of Tonopah looks good right now, mainly on account of the big mines that are operating within 40 to 60 miles. The mine at Round Mountain is a huge operation and they produce a lot of gold. Manhattan is going to be a big producer before it's over with.

RM: Is that run by Echo Bay, too?

ST: Yes. Then there's a lot of drilling going on in the area. I don't know what they'll amount to, but they won't know until they drill them. And of course as long as the Tonopah Test Site is there and continues to grow, I think the economics will be good. I hope they settle that stupid strike; they're hurting now.

The only bad thing about mining is that it's been feast or famine. Gold's high and it's going to go higher and they have extended the life of Round Mountain 20 years. They are going to go out and build a little town there. They have a lot of other deposits near Round Mountain, large shale deposit right behind Round Mountain that belonged to a man by the name of Stiegmeyer. He owned it for years and it's a huge deposit, and the gold is in between the layers of shale. It's a fine sediment of gold and it's almost microscopic. The old man built a little mill and hauled the shale to the mill. Well, it's not that good of ore to begin with and he was hauling 7 tons to get maybe 100 pounds of stuff to put through the mill. It's not in the shale at all. I think Round Mountain Gold owns that, too, now. All they have to do is blast it and screen it and they can take the gold out of the screenings. They don't have to worry about the shale then; they can dump that off somewhere else. If the price of gold goes higher they'll probably start to work it.

RM: It would be ideal for cyaniding, too.

ST: Yes. It would dissolve it instantly. It couldn't be leached because it's too fine. The stuff it associates with is just like dust. You can't leach it because if it got wet, it would just pack and be like clay so it would have to go through tanks, but it would go through awfully fast. You would have to have a very powerful magnifying glass to even see it.

I met a fellow who was going to buy the property and set up a plant. He wasn't hauling the ore to the mill. He was hauling water to his mill, which was twice as bad because it takes more than a ton of water to treat a ton of ore. That didn't last long. The guy's name was Ferry, out of California. I hauled diesel fuel up there and I told him, "You cannot haul water to ore." If you can't haul ore to water you sure can't haul water to ore. I think they figured 5 tons or 7 tons of water for one ton of ore.

He didn't last long. Before he left, he came to me and said, "I wish I had taken your advice the first time you came out. Took me awhile to realize that the cost of bringing the water was more than what I was getting out of the ore."

RM: Could we talk about some of the people you've known in town who might be worth noting, like Sheriff Thomas?

ST: Sheriff Thomas was what you refer to as an old-time western sheriff. He never carried a gun, though in the movies of course all sheriffs carry big guns and had big Stetson hats and badges. Everyone called him Bill and he was a fine man. He was a gentle man, respected by everybody. If there was a fight going on down in one of the bars and they called him, he'd go down there and go into the bar and he'd go over and collar whoever he thought was causing trouble and say, "Come on, Jim (or Jack or whoever), I'm going to throw you in jail." He'd walk out the door and the guy would

climb docilely into the car and he'd go up to the jail. He'd say, "Get out of the car, I'm going to lock you up." And he would lock him up. If the guy had been drinking and he needed a drink, he would give him one to quiet him down.

He never had any trouble. There was one incident that took place when a local fellow had gone on a rampage and I don't know whether he had shot somebody, or he was threatening to shoot, but he went out in the hills. He was kind of a dangerous guy, and they were going to form a posse and go out and bring him in dead or alive. Thomas went out and he said, "You can come out with me, but when we get there I'm going up and get him myself. Otherwise, some of you will get shot." So he drove up the canyon and finally stopped and yelled this guy's name, and the guy answered him.

He told the fellow to come on down, and the guy said, "If I come down, you're going to put me under arrest."

Thomas said, "Come on down here; you're under arrest." The guy came down and he said, "Get in the car, we're going to town." The guy got in the car and they drove to town and Bill locked him up. I think the guy was charged with something that wasn't serious.

RM: He really just knew how to handle people, didn't he?

ST: Yes. They knew he wouldn't lie to them, for one thing, and that he'd give them a break. Most of the time, he'd boot them out the next day. If he had two prisoners in jail at once, it was a big night. He was a real, good, honest man. I wish we had one like him now. He was a big man, and I think he was in his 70s when he finally quit. He was sheriff in the teens and then he was out for one term for some reason; I think somebody beat him. He ran again and was sheriff up until the time he quit. He was the sheriff when I was a kid. In fact, he grabbed me a few times and wanted to

know what I had stolen the night before. Everybody liked Bill. He didn't throw his weight around. He could walk into a joint and everybody would say, "Hi, Bill" and go over and talk to him. He might even have a belt with them once in awhile.

RM: Did he marry and have a family?

ST: He had a succession of girlfriends, I think, and then he finally married a woman when he was about 50. I don't really remember too much about that. I know he finally married and when he died she lived in Tonopah quite awhile and then she died. Bill was pretty old when he died; he was up in his 80s. After he retired he did a little bit of prospecting, and he liked to go out fishing and hunting. He just relaxed. He didn't have much of a pension, that's a lead pipe cinch. But maybe he saved some money.

RM: What other people do you remember?

ST: Most of the people I remember were like myself. I never did pay much attention to politicians. I remember meeting people when I was a kid. My father was a friend of Death Valley Scotty and even when I was that young, I figured him for a charlatan. And the politicians would come to town for the big rallies, Key Pittman and Oddie and Scrugham; a whole bunch of them. I never had very much faith in politicians. They'd promise you the moon, and if you reached for it, they'd break your arm. The people I always remember were the ordinary people, more or less in my same circumstances. Kids I went to school with, a lot of the old-timers around town who were orangutans, some were alcoholics, some were prospectors trying to make money. They were interesting people, they are the ones who made the state - not the politicians or the big shots. The big shots were either crooks or liars or both. That's the way I felt about it.

RM: Are there any specific people you want to recall?

ST: I can think of a lot of them, but when they died they had an obituary of maybe five lines. They all had nicknames. There was Crazy Mike, who lived out at Lone Mountain. He had an old white horse and a wagon. He'd been involved in an accident and got a check every month from some settlement. And the man was touched in the head. He would come to town with his horse and Emery Marty of the Central Market was more or less his guardian. The money was sent to Emery and he'd dole it out to old Mike and sell him groceries. Mike never had any money, because he'd give it away. When we were young we used to hang around the old Ford Garage, during the winter time especially, because they had a nice fire in there. The fellow who worked there, Frank Gustie, was going with a girl in Round Mountain and he might let us watch the place while he was gone. Old Mike would come up there and he'd bring a piece of wonder rock. He had a real high voice and he'd say, "This rock come from the moon, this is the bread from the moon." He was way out. And he'd always give us cigarettes. Otherwise, we would walk off. "I want to give you a pack of cigareets." And then he would pass them around. Then we'd listen for awhile, and then we'd get restless and he'd pass out some more. Poor old Mike. He was harmless but a little touched in the head. I think his horse was as old as he was. He'd come to town with his little wagon and he'd walk in, he wouldn't ride in the wagon because it was too much for the horse. He'd get his groceries and then walk back clear out to Lone Mountain leading the old, white horse.

There were hundreds of these people. I told you about Rocky Mountain George, and how he and old Helen used to walk down to Death Valley. There were hundreds of people just like that.

RM: This might be a good place to wind this up. I think there's still a

type of personality or character in Nevada which I term the Nevada-type personality. It's a frontier type of thing. What does that mean to you?

ST: Well, if you want to refer to them as typical Nevadans. It doesn't necessarily apply to all the residents of the state. I think [there are] less and less all the time. A lot of it had to do with mining, as we discussed on prior tapes; the dream of hitting it big. They were all dreamers; very impractical people. Most of them were footloose, with no roots down; they wandered around the state. There are still a few of them, but they are not miners or anything, a lot of them are gamblers. They just keep rotating around the state. They'll go work for a place for a few months, then they get the itchy foot and go to Hawthorne, to Lovelock, etc. They are moving all the time and they are a different kind of dreamer. Most of them are gamblers. Not only do they deal, they also gamble themselves. I think it's all a matter of thinking they are going to hit it big someday, whether on a table or in a gold mine. Most of them don't do anything. They end up old and broke and none of their dreams ever came true. That applies to mining especially. I know people who have made money in mining, but . . .

RM: A lot more who didn't.

ST: I wish I had a dollar for every dollar put in the ground; you could have all the dollars that came out of it.

RM: One of the things that really staggers my imagination is something I read in the paper this year: if the state of Nevada were a country, it would be Number 8 in production of gold. This year Nevada will produce 2.7 million ounces in gold. And the whole thing has changed; it's big companies running big open-pit operations now. The era of the little Tonopah underground miner is a thing of the past, and it's been dwarfed.

ST: Bob Wilson and Norman Coombs are people I can think of right now who are still mining gold. There are others who, if they were 20 or 30 years younger . . . No, it's an operation where the pick and shovel hang on the wall, and there's a 30-yard shovel sitting out there digging. One scoop will fill a 30-ton truck. They drill holes for blasting that might be 100 feet deep. They don't blast 15 or 20 tons, but 300, 400, or 500 tons at once. The mills are huge. In fact, sometimes they don't even build mills. They are at Round Mountain, because they realize they have lost a lot of their coarser gold.

They are going to heap leach, but they're going to take the rejects and put them through a mill because they're losing the coarse gold and they are smart enough to know it. Everything now is pile it up, put the cyanide solution over it, let the solution percolate through it and pump it back, pump it back, and after 5 or 7 days, whatever it is, run it over the precipitation tanks and you're done. Then go out and build another pad and put another pile on. What did Round Mountain build a pad out there for - \$3 million or something? They put a mound of ore on it. They'll mine more ore in a day than some mines can produce in a year.

RM: I think the state will probably produce more wealth in its gold this year than came out of Tonopah and Goldfield combined.

ST: They'll make the Comstock, Tonopah, and Goldfield look like pikers. What did Tonopah produce? \$150 million, something like that. That's not much money compared to what they are producing now. They don't produce it by the ounce, but by the pound. They break it down into ounces, but when you talk about a couple of million ounces of gold that's quite a few pounds.

RM: Another thing that really strikes me in talking to people around town

is the terrible toll that the mines took on people, with the silicosis and everything.

ST: Yes, the mines were killers.

RM: Some people would be gone in 6 months. And now the guys drive this huge equipment and they go home to their double-wide and it's a completely different way of live and the human toll that it's extracting . . . there's no comparison.

ST: None at all, unless they're killed in an accident. They have women driving trucks that haul 40 and 45 tons. They don't have steering wheels, they have 2 little levers. They climb a ladder to get to the cab. The woman sits up there and she weighs 115 pounds and she's working these little levers. It has huge engines under it that would propel a 200-foot ship through the ocean. The trucks and shovels are huge; they bring them in in pieces. They can't haul them on the highways because of their size. The first time I ever saw much in the way of hauling was when they hauled the concentrates in from Tybo in the old Faegol trucks and tires. They'd haul maybe 5 or 6 tons of concentrates, that's all. That truck wouldn't pull the hat off your head.

RM: It probably wouldn't even haul one of the present-day truck tires now.

ST: It couldn't. It could barely pull itself. It was an all-day trip from Tybo for those trucks, and Tybo was only 75 miles away. They would hit those grades and they would be going maybe a mile and a half, 2 miles an hour. Now you see these rigs going down the highway with maybe 3 trailers behind them faster than a passenger car. Progress.

It's hard to believe that from the time I was a child to today, a man has reached the moon. I'd say in 60 years we went from nothing except silent movies to the radio to the talkies to TV to the moon. They've sent

probes out to the outer limits of our solar system. They have photographed Mars.

RM: In another 20 years they'll go to Mars.

ST: They'll be living up there in igloos or something.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

[McCracken and Terrell are joined by Louise Terrell.]

RM: Solan, we were going to talk about some of the tales and stories from this part of Nevada.

ST: I think I was involved in most of them. I'll more or less try and take them in chronological order. I believe I told you about working at Mizpah Hotel and getting the job delivering laundry; then I became an elevator boy, too. I don't believe I talked about how I drove the Model-T Ford truck I acquired.

LT: How old were you?

ST: I was going on 10 years old. Of course, there was no way I could get a driver's license. I don't even know if they had them in Nevada then.

LT: Were most kids driving at age 10?

ST: No, but my father was a remarkable man. As I said before, we came to Tonopah in an old Vim truck and he used to let me drive it around Colusa. It was a horrible old truck, but it would travel about 5 or 6 miles an hour. When we came to Tonopah we had that Chevrolet and he taught me how to drive it. Model-Ts were simple to drive because all you had was 3 pedals, and the throttle and the spark lever were up on the steering column. You could stop it by stepping on all 3 pedals at once. They were very simple. And I did learn how to drive my dad's old Dodge truck. Of

course, if you went out and bought gas that would cut down on your profits of 25 cents an hour I was getting delivering laundry, so we had a real fine source of gas, which was a siphon hose and a 5-gallon can. We'd go around siphoning a few gallons here and there, so it was strictly all profit. I really enjoyed it.

After that my brother Starle, who was just above me in age - between Don and me - had worked at the Western Union. And the manager of Western Union was named Rogers, I think. My brother was going to the Citizens' Military Training Camp in Salt Lake City. They took kids about 14 to 18 years of age and they'd teach them military routine and care for a rifle and that. He loved it. While he was gone, I was the relief Western Union messenger. They were switching from the Morse key to a teletype machine, so Mr. Rogers was back going to school to learn how to operate it. And the woman who took over his job had worked there before as an operator, Mrs. Fissler. She had at least one child; his name was Pete. I got the job - I think it was for 2 or 3 weeks. They paid lousy money, and I absolutely refused to wear the uniform. I would not wear it. It was quite a point of dissension between Mrs. Fissler and me. I would wear the hat until I got out the door, then I'd stuff it in my shirt. There were quite a few stockbrokers in town; that was most of the business. I was taking messages to the stockbrokers. There was also quite a line of prostitutes down on the west, southwest end of town, and they were always getting telegrams from other prostitutes or boyfriends wanting to borrow money. Mrs. Fissler absolutely refused to let me take them down there. I wanted to take them down because my brother had told me they were good for at least a 50-cent tip.

LT: Were you about 10?

ST: No, I must have been about 11 or 12. And that was one source of income that I wanted. I could always tell when there was a telegram for the line, because she'd type it up as it came off the Morse key, put it in an envelope, and put it in her desk drawer. I'd sit there patiently; I'd never argue with her about it. The minute she went to the restroom, I'd go over and jerk those telegrams out of the drawer, and out the door I'd go, right down to the line, and I'd get my tips. We'd have a row when I'd get back. She would always threaten to fire me. That went on all the time I was working there. Between the telegrams down to the line and the uniform Mrs. Fissler and I did not have a very happy summer. I would not wear that uniform. It had leggings and it was a wool uniform, something like what the old Salvation Army wore. Tight collar and that stupid hat.

Later on, or during the same period of time, we would go out to Divide, 4 or 5 miles south of Tonopah. There were a lot of old abandoned houses out there and Jimmy Donahue's father had 2 hard-rubber tired trucks, a Federal and a Republic. They were little 4-cylinder trucks, no cab, open seats; more like a buggy. We'd go around and talk to families [in Tonopah], usually they were widows, and ask them if they'd be interested in buying boards for firewood. We'd charge \$5 for a load. You could pile up a pretty good load; you could get a small house on them, torn down. So we would get a couple of contracts to get loads of firewood and go down to the Standard Oil Company, which was a fine source of free gas. We'd go down at night and get a couple of 5-gallon cans of gas, fire up the old Federal or the Republic, whichever one was running, and go out to Divide. Of course they were all corrugated dirt roads and those trucks were an absolute torture to ride in. The springs were just as stiff as if they weren't there. We'd go out and tear down a shack and throw it on these trucks and

haul it home for \$5.

My older brother Don got kind of involved. He and another fellow used my dad's old Dodge truck. It's quite a slow job tearing a building down, so Don would go into the house, hang about 4 sticks of dynamite from the ceiling on a wire, then he'd light the fuse and run off to one side. Boom! the roof would go up, the walls would go out, and down would come the roof. And all the nails were loose; they were quite easy to tear down. I don't know why no one ever stopped us from doing that. Pretty soon there weren't any houses out at Divide; we tore them all down. At \$5 a load that was quite a bit of money for a couple of kids.

Did I ever tell the story about George Jackson, who hired me to drive a Model-T one-ton truck to Westgard Pass?

RM: No, you didn't tell us that.

ST: He and his wife were moving to Westgard in late summer or early fall. He got a job as watchman at this mine, and he had a big old Model-T truck that we used later out at Eden Creek. He'd overhauled it, and he had good tires on it. He wanted to go out to Westgard Pass and take his car and the truck with all his belongings. He hired me and was going to give me \$5 to drive it out there. Well, once again Jimmy Donahue and I . . . I got together with Jimmy and told him what I was going to do. I asked him if he wanted to go with me for a ride. George was going to bring us back in his car. Jimmy said, "Oh, sure."

We left town about 5:00 a.m. and I guess my mother had made a pretty good lunch for Jimmy and me, so we started off down the road. You used to go down through the dumps over to Silver Peak and up over the hills, then over to the south end of Fish Lake Valley. What was the name of the springs out there - Oasis Springs - there was a private school out there

for years . . . Then Westgard Pass went up from there. So we started out. The Model-T boiled constantly on any kind of grade, so we had to back it up.

RM: No power?

ST: No, no power. We had more power in reverse than we did in low. Going up any kind of grade you had to have a full tank of gas. We'd back it up those grades and Donahue would keep putting rocks under the wheels so we could stop and cool it off. We started out with a barrel of gas, a barrel of water, and maybe 5 gallons of oil. By the time we got to that little springs out there in Fish Lake Valley, we had to fill the barrel up again. We used an awful lot of gas. We got just beyond Oasis Springs at about 4:30 or 5:00 in the afternoon. We had eaten our lunch about 9:30 that morning. By 5:30 we were starving. There was a highway maintenance station with 4 or 5 people working. I told Jimmy, "This is as far as I'm going." It was getting late in the afternoon and the sun was going down. "I'm not driving this one foot farther." So I went in and talked to the men there and asked who the foreman was.

The guy said, "I am."

I told him my problem, and if he didn't mind we wanted to park the truck somewhere where it would be protected. We'd wait for the owner of the Model-T to come back and pick us up. He said, "That's fine." So we went out and sat in the truck. We were hungry and we could smell the cooking. About half an hour later the foreman came out and asked if we had eaten that day.

"Oh, yes," I said, "we had lunch." The guy asked what time we had eaten, and I told him that morning about 9:30. He asked if we were hungry and took us in and fed us.

About 8:00, down the hills came George Jackson, driving like a maniac. I think he had a Hudson coupe, and he was absolutely livid with rage because we hadn't come up there. I told him, "Mr. Jackson, this Model-T has gone as far as I'm taking it. I don't care if it ever gets up to Westgard Pass. I've had it." So he told us to get back in the car and we'd go to Tonopah. That's the most harrowing trip I've ever had in my life. He had a terrible temper, and he had it all the way to Tonopah. And he would go across those dirt roads, oh my God, and hit those ditches. We were flying in the air, and he never quit cursing from the time he left the station till we hit Tonopah. And he very reluctantly gave me the \$5. I gave Jimmy a couple of dollars for going with me. What a horrible trip.

RM: Did you tell me that George was out at Eden Creek?

ST: Yes.

RM: Did he have his own place?

ST: He was interested in placer. He was another character, but he was a good man. But he sure had a terrible temper.

Then I went to work for Victor Lambertucci. He had this little farm down below town; Victor and Dominic Lambertucci.

LT: How old were you then?

ST: I was in high school, probably a sophomore. Victor had bought an old slaughter house that was situated about a mile west of Goldfield, kind of up a little draw. He wanted to tear it down and move it to Tonopah. He hired me, Bozo Boscovich, Tom Beko, and Mike Garilovich, and he rented my dad's Dodge truck. I think all he had was a Model-T, for delivering vegetables around town.

So we'd go over there early in the morning, just at sunrise. I think we were getting \$4 a day. The first thing we started to do was tear out

the insides of the building. The walls were approximately 12 inches thick and full of ground-up cork. We had to sack that. It was a dusty, foul-smelling job. But we put it in sacks and hauled those to Tonopah. When we got all the cork out we started tearing down the roof. And they used almost all tongue and groove lumber in that building; it was very well built. We were up on the roof and we'd take the boards off, pull the nails out of the lumber, and put them in bundles. Six I think, depending on the length. We tried to get all the same length. Lambertucci and I never got along very well, for some reason. We were working out in the hot, boiling sun. And Bozo Boscovich was kind of crazy; we used to kind of yell at each other.

Lambertucci for some reason - I guess because he thought I was a foreigner, the only non-alien there - was always on me. He'd yell from down on the ground (we took the roof off and there was cork in the roof, so we were sacking it up there), "Terrillio, bunch-a deeze." He wanted me to come down and start tying the boards in bunches. I'd ignore him and he'd yell and I'd finally go down. I was kind of angry about it. He'd yell, "Terrillio, bunch-a deeze, bunch-a deeze." I walked over to the edge of the roof with a big bag of cork, like a cotton bag. You could pick those bags up and they didn't weigh anything. He was down there yelling and I threw one down right on top of him. I got down there on the ground and I was going to quit. He started yelling at me, "You're a trouble maker, Terrillio."

I told him a few things that he didn't like. He started hopping around, and I lost my cool, grabbed a 2x4 about 3 feet long and took out after him, and chased that old guy halfway to Goldfield. Of course, that was my last shift. He started to say, "You're fired."

And I said, "I quit." That made him madder. On the way to town, he always rode in the cab with me. But that day, he sat in back. One of the other guys rode in front. So I got in town, dropped the guys off and went down to let him off, and I said, "I want my pay."

He said, "Tomorrow."

I said, "I want my pay and I want it now." So we had another big row. He finally went in the house and came out and paid me off.

Years [later] I liked the old guy; I grew up a little. He'd say, "Terillio, you were an ornery kid." Poor old Victor. He was hard working. He built that slaughterhouse and had some kind of refrigeration plant in it. It was finished about 2 or 3 years before the war. He was raising cattle and sheep and he made a lot of money on fresh meat during the war when the air base was being built.

RM: Where was the slaughterhouse located?

ST: Right down at his place. The building is still there, I think.

RM: What do you know about his operation?

ST: Not much. I know that they worked awfully hard. He had quite a greenhouse down there. They used to raise flowers during the winter and sell them. Dominic was very subservient to his brother Victor. Victor would go to Italy, but Dominic never went anywhere. He was a nice little man. Victor was all right, too. God, he was excitable.

Then I worked down at Millers for Mrs. Trueba. That was after I got out of school. I told you about rebuilding the mill down there. I was dishwasher. They had a cook, Whitey something, [who had been] cooking there for quite awhile. He liked to drink. He stayed pretty sober most of the time. Mrs. Trueba's husband Frank was a great, big husky man and he kind of kept his thumb on Whitey. But lots of times he would come to town

and Whitey would get out of hand. Mrs. Trueba would call Frank and he'd come down and sober him up.

The train stopped there one day with a bunch of supplies for the mill. A hobo got off the train and came over looking for work, to see if he could do something for a meal. He and the cook had worked somewhere together, so Whitey wanted to hire this guy as a dishwasher. Mrs. Trueba wouldn't do it. She said, "No, Terrell is doing a good job, and I want to keep him." Well, that made Whitey kind of mad so he started to nip on a bottle he had hidden. By the time dinner was served, he was drunk as a skunk.

He and Mrs. Trueba got into quite a row and he ran over and grabbed a big butcher knife and she ran out the door yelling through the dining hall. I was the only body in the place and he didn't like me at all, so he took out after me. Of course, I abandoned ship too; I went out the back door. In the meantime, Mrs. Trueba ran out to the porch, and some of the other workers were there. One of the fellows was real friendly with the Truebas and he came in and this guy was waving this knife, so he hit him alongside the head and knocked him about 30 feet.

When Frank came down, they hauled the guy to Tonopah and fired him. Of course, Mrs. Trueba had to do the cooking for a couple of days until they could hire another cook. They got some cook and his wife and she was a tippler. She was making beds and that. By the end of the day, you could hear her singing for 2 miles. Staggering around those rooms, making beds and getting drunk. Mrs. Trueba fired her, so he quit. It was a constant battle. I think restaurants still have a big problem putting up with cooks. The guy who was wanting my job, Frank, came to Tonopah and lived there until the day he died. He was kind of a character.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

ST: I'm going to tell you about a couple of things that happened that I thought were awfully funny. There was a man who lived in Tonopah named Charles Hudson. He was a mechanic or truck driver. He was a real quiet guy, drank a little but not much, and he minded his own business. He was downtown one night and he had some kind of a car; a Chevy. I can't remember much about the car, but I remembered what happened. He was in a bar talking and he came out and his car was gone. He couldn't believe it. He started asking people, "What happened to my car?"

They said, "A couple of young guys got in it awhile ago and went up the street." So Charlie got a friend with a car and they started up the street. And he stopped a few more people and they said, "Oh yeah, we saw them turn out on the road to Ely." So they went in hot pursuit. Charlie had had a few belts; he was really getting madder by the minute. They got out on the dirt road and they could see a dust trail. They went hell bent for election after the car and they caught up with these 2 young guys out by Rye Patch. They were barreling down the road and I guess this car ran out of gas and the 2 guys were standing there. Charlie jumped out of the car and he was yelling he was going to kill them. He scared the living hell out of them. I think they were trying to get back to Manhattan. So they dove under the car. And you can believe this or not - I don't care - but Charlie was so mad and so strong that he ran over and grabbed it by the running board and turned the car right over on its side. Of course, these 2 kids were really scared. One went north and one south. Charlie didn't know what to do. He took out after one of them, but he realized in short

order that he was never going to catch that guy. So they went back over and the 2 of them dropped his car back down on its wheels, put gas in it and came back to Tonopah.

Another thing that happened was [when] Bozo Boscovich was working down at the Midland Garage. It was after we got out of school. He had to have been one of the strongest men I have ever known. There was a big, tall miner in town named Tivall - we all called him Skinny.

LT: A Finlander?

ST: A Finlander. He was about 6'2" or 6'3" but real slender. And he'd stop down there once in awhile. People were looking for inner tubes a lot to cut up into strips to start fires. He came in there one afternoon. Bozo and I and a couple of the other guys were hanging around, because they always had a good fire going in the wintertime in the parts room. Skinny Tivall wanted to know if he could get an inner tube. Bozo said, "I think there's a couple out there. Let's go out and look."

He was bent over pulling these tubes out from under the bench. If one of them was blown out, he'd throw it to one side. He pulled another one out and Tivall jumped on his back and started to choke him for no reason at all. Bozo let a roar out of him and he reared up, and Tivall flew off his back. He must have weighed 160 or 170 pounds. Bozo was about 5'10" and he grabbed Skinny by the belt and by the back of the shirt, below his neck, and picked him up and ran to the front door and he threw him clear across the street just like a javelin. Right over in the corner there was a Chinese laundry. He threw him clear across the street and Skinny rolled up against the Chinese laundry.

Well, Skinny got to his feet and I never saw a man disappear so fast in my life. And for 2 or 3 years after that he would never walk down in

front of the Ford Garage; he always walked behind the Chinese laundry. I couldn't believe my eyes; I thought he was throwing a 2x4. And the street was pretty wide. He never touched the ground from the time Bozo got to the front door till he hit the laundry. Bozo used to pick up Ford engines off the back of a truck and set them on the ground. God, he was strong. One of the most easy-going, quietest guys in the world. When Skinny started to choke him he lost his cool.

RM: You mentioned they used the inner tubes for starting fires. I've never seen that before.

ST: Well, it was rubber, for one thing. You cut strips, then put in some papers, put the strip on top with wood over it and it would start the fire burning. It made a lot of smoke. Most of the time, all you had was boards. These guys were all batching and they weren't the best cooks and housekeepers in the world.

LT: Talking about that family in the old days.

ST: Well, I won't mention names, because some of the grandchildren still live here.

LT: Does that matter, Bob?

RM: It's up to the person.

ST: I'd rather not.

There's a woman who had 3 or 4 boys. They lived up on the hill over here, and they were always scrounging for wood like everybody else. Right across the street there was about a 4- or 5-room house. After the mines shut down the man had moved to California. He took his family with him and never came back. Later on I found that he had been paying taxes on the house all along. Well, that was a real source of wood close by, so the boys would go over and none of the places were locked. They started

tearing out the interior partitions that weren't so visible. They tore out all of the interior first without the house collapsing on them, then they started to work on the sides and the roof. In about 3 years, the house was gone and all that was left was nails.

One summer the man [from California] drove up and he was looking around and I guess he thought he was losing his mind, because his house was gone. This family had moved by then. The guy was asking around, "What happened to my house?" Nobody seemed to know. He could see all the trash that was still there. He went up to the police station - it was downtown then - and nobody knew anything about it. He was out his house and his taxes on it.

When I was working at the Ford Garage (Red and I had it) there was a promoter who was promoting that dry lake down below Coaldale.

RM: Going toward Bishop?

ST: Yes. He had some kind of theory that there was gold, silver, and quicksilver in it. There had been a lot of people before this who had started operations out there. But this guy had quite a little deal there. He had 2 or 3 guys working for him, building this patented processor he had built.

RM: Was it strictly a scam?

ST: He was a good little guy, he really was, but I didn't think he had a full string of fish. He had a Ford truck that he blew the engine up on. So he came up and talked to Red and me about the cost for a new engine. I think then we were selling that flathead V-8 for \$97.50, installed in the car. He told us he didn't have a way of getting it into town. I told him I'd go down there and put it in.

So we built him a complete engine; all I had to do was take the old

one out and slide this one in. Pomeroy Neighbors went out with me to help me. It was right out in the middle of that sand and everything. This guy built a tripod so we could hoist the engine out. I think the wind was blowing, too; a horrible trip as far as I was concerned. We went out and pulled the radiator off, jerked the engine out, put the new one in and had it running in about 3 hours after we got there. He was happy as a clam. You couldn't get that done now for \$2,000, even if you could find some damn fool to do it.

I'll tell you another thing that happened when I worked at the Ford Garage. I'm full of these stories.

LT: I hope it's the one about the insect.

ST: A fellow came in one day in about '47 or '48. He came in with this car, a nice young man, well-dressed and clean. I asked him what I could do for him. He said he just didn't know what the problem was with the car. He said, "Going downhill and across the flat, the car runs like a sewing machine. But the minute I get any kind of a grade, it starts to slow down like it's running out of gas. Finally I have to stop, wait awhile and away I go again." He said, "This has been going on ever since I left Ely."

I told him that I thought it might be his fuel pump. Fuel pumps on Fords were notorious for going out rapidly. So we brought it in. The first thing I always did was check the flex line that went from the solid copper line to the fuel pump. You put your thumb on one end and suck on it to see if it was leaking. It was good, so we put a new fuel pump on the car. I told the guy that I thought that would do the trick.

We went down towards the air base and came back, and it did the same damn thing. I thought then that it might be the points. It wasn't very likely, but we were really grasping at straws. We fussed with that car for

about 3 or 4 hours, and every time we took it out to test, we'd come back with the same thing. So, I thought, "Well, I'll blow out the gas line and make sure that the gas line is clear." I'd blown it out once, but I thought I'd do it again. You just hook an air hose to it, and you could hear the gas bubbling. And I had the flex line off. I thought, "I can't understand this; I've tried everything in the world, but still . . ." so I was just fooling around, never even thinking.

I had the flex line in my hand and I blew on the end that went in the fuel pump. Out came a bee. There was my trouble! I put it back together and took it for a ride and it ran beautifully. We didn't charge the guy for all the work we'd done; we couldn't. He kept the fuel pump and the points we put in. He said, "Well, it won't hurt it any." He paid his bill and was happy as a clam.

It wasn't 2 or 3 days later that a guy came in with about the same year Ford or the same symptoms - identical. I said, "Oh, that's no problem." The guy drove in over the pit, I raised the hood, took the flex line off, blew on it and a fly came out.

The guy looked at me. He said, "Let's take this for a ride." So I hooked it back up, and it ran like a sewing machine. He kept looking at me real strangely, and he said, "I want to ask you something. How in the world did you know that the insect was in there?"

"Mister," I said, "when you've had all the years experience I've had, you just know." I never told him that I'd spent a day before figuring out the same stupid problem. Talk about a coincidence. I'll bet that man still talks about that, if he is still alive.

LT: A fine mechanic!

ST: Pure luck.

RM: They really know what they're doing in Tonopah.

ST: If a bug hadn't blown out, I would have had to start all over. When we were out at Golden Arrow there was a family out there I believe I've mentioned before, named Jackson. The Jackson family and the Tillman family had come up from California; they were neighbors.

RM: Was this when you were with Myers?

ST: Yes. We'd moved over and were working down the cotter shaft. They had a Chevy truck and I think I mentioned that it finally broke down. Ted, the boy, was about 18. He thought he was a mechanic and all he could do was take things apart. The old man one day had a flat tire and he'd patched the tube, and he was putting it back together. They were pumping it up on the wheel. He was crouched down working on it. Jackson had a little dog called Pard. The old man was crouched down working and the dog walked over to him and raised up his right leg and wet right on his back. Jackson went 3 feet in the air and started looking around for something he could grab to kill that dog. He started after that dog. I bet he chased him a mile. Pard was way ahead of him. And this was a crazy little dog - kind of an ornery dog, short-legged. You could say, "Grin, Pard" and he'd roll back lips and grin at you.

LT: How about Mrs. Jackson's cooking?

ST: Oh, my Lord. Mrs. Jackson was English. Old D. R. had met her over in England during World War I and he married her and brought her over here. I only had 2 contacts with English cooks in my life - Mrs. D. R. (Rose) Jackson and Mrs. George Jackson. To my way of thinking, they were absolutely the world's worst cooks. Later on I'll tell you about a Thanksgiving dinner we had at Eden Creek.

They had invited Don and me over to eat. I'd go over to Eden Creek

once in awhile and I'd kill a deer. I would leave half of it with my folks and I'd bring the other half back to Golden Arrow and give the Jacksons the front quarter. Being the donor, I wasn't going to let go of the hind quarters except to my family. They were living off jackrabbits and things like that. That deer meat was a blessing, but they had 3 girls and Ted; there were 6 of them. So a front quarter wouldn't last very long. But they'd invite you over to eat once in awhile. Don and I would go over, but we hated to do it. The potatoes were half raw and the meat was overdone. She was the world's worst cook. We'd try to make any excuse we could not to eat. We never did go over and eat jackrabbit. I drew a line at that.

But getting back to George Jackson: when they were over at Eden Creek, he and my father were working that stupid placer. Mrs. Jackson was a nice little lady. She'd come over and visit my mother. They'd talk, and she was quite a knitter and they'd sit there and pass the time. So one Thanksgiving dinner we invited the Jacksons to come over to eat. George Chubey came over from his camp. Maybe I was the only Terrell boy there. Mrs. Jackson came over the day before and said, "Now Mrs. Terrell, I want you to understand that poor George has a real delicate stomach; don't be too upset if he doesn't eat much." My mother said that was no problem. Mrs. Jackson had mentioned Mr. Jackson's delicate stomach before. So they came over. My dad had made some elderberry wine, which was pretty potent. They were sitting around there having a glass or two and old George had started to feel pretty good, laughing and joking. He sat down at that table and Mrs. Jackson could not believe her eyes. I never saw a man eat so much in my life. The first good meal that he'd had in years. We had turkey and dressing. Mother was a fine cook. Apple pie, pumpkin pie. I thought the guy was going to founder himself.

LT: Was he the one who kept saying, "Pass the sop."

ST: No, that was D. R. Jackson at Golden Arrow. We'd go over there and have mashed potatoes and they never had gravy. Maybe it was the English way, but he'd say, "Rose, where's the sop?" I'd look around. I never knew what sop was. She'd get up and she had the skillet on the stove that she'd cooked the meat in. Throw in some water, get it boiling, and that was the gravy. Then he'd pour it over his potatoes and dunk his bread into it. Horrible looking stuff. Nothing was ever cooked except the meat, and it was overcooked.

There used to be a restaurant in town called the Quick Lunch about down where the Chinese restaurant is now. It was only about maybe as wide as this room, if that wide; like a big hallway. And it was run by 2 Serbians - Pete and Marco Dobro. Old Pete was the cook. I don't know whether he had a club foot or what, but he had a foul temper. His feet hurt all the time. You'd go in there and a lot of the women I went to school with worked there as waitresses. And they were all Serbians - Catherine Lydon, Milka Beko . . . You'd get a hot beef sandwich which would be 2 slices of bread with beef and gravy, potatoes and coffee, two bits. Fine, big, healthy meals. The girls would take back the order and when it was done, Old Pete would yell, "Tak it." If no girl would come fast enough, he'd yell louder, "Tak it!" His voice would go up 2 octaves. The third time, he'd yell, "TAK IT, GOD DAMN IT, TAK IT!" What a place. That's where most of the single guys would eat; there and the Tonopah Club. The Tonopah Club had a short-order place, too, just up the street. They had better food, but the prices were all about the same.

RM: This was when?

ST: The '30s, up until the war. I think they were all working during the

war, too. I came in town one time with old Beatty, one of the stockholders out at Eden Creek. His wife was a real nag. Old man Beatty could only stand it so long. He got real sick one day and I thought he was going to die, I really did. I had to rush him to town, and I hadn't gotten out of the canyon, when he was well. I said, "Mr. Beatty, you want to go back home?" No, he said, because he still had to go to town and see the doctor.

So when we got to town, the first place he wanted to go was to the Quick Lunch. He ordered a T-bone steak, which was clear out of my reach; I think it was 75 cents. A full dinner, with a salad. I had a hot beef sandwich. That man was no more sick than I was. He wanted to get away from the old lady for awhile. I can't remember the story he told her when we got back; it was pretty far-fetched, but she believed him. He was a small man, and she was bigger than he was; outweighed him by about twice. I really thought he was going to die, moaning and groaning, until he got down in the canyon.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

ST: We were always looking for ways to make some spending money, of which we didn't have very much. One time there was some road work going on down west of Tonopah, down towards Millers. The construction outfit had built a big outdoor privy, all framed out of lumber, and for the siding they had stretched burlap sacks over it. I think it had 4 holes in it. We were riding burros one day - I think it was Lloyd Eason and I - and we happened to ride by and here were all these beautiful burlap sacks. Sides and tops too, to keep the sun off the occupants. I told Lloyd we could get 10 cents

apiece for those bags from the water company or over at Andy Rausch's grain store. Lloyd asked what we should do and I told him that we should come back when it's dark. We went down there that night and tore all the burlap sacks off that privy. There must have been 50 or 60 sacks. We were smart enough to know that we had better not sell them the next day, so we stored them in my dad's garage. We'd go down and sell 5 at a time, a couple or 3 weeks later. Boy, the foreman was mad the next day; there was his outhouse without any burlap sacks on it.

We used to go around and collect cardboard boxes at J.C. Penney and some of the grocery stores and we'd sell them over at the bakery. They shipped a lot of bread, believe it or not, to San Francisco. If you ever had a bite of it, you'd see why. It was the best French bread I've ever eaten.

LT: He said he'd pay \$5 for a loaf of Fabbi's French bread today, if he could get it.

ST: Gladly.

RM: That's what it was - Fabbi's?

ST: Yes; Pete Fabbi. When he built that bakery, he brought up an Italian mason from San Francisco who built the oven for him - all brick lined.

Good French bread has to be baked on brick. At a certain time during the baking process, they have to give it a shot of steam. They cut a slit in the top, and the steam just opens it up. You've never eaten bread like it in your life.

RM: How did he heat the oven?

ST: Coal. He had a firebox under it. It's still there, I think.

RM: Where is it located?

LT: It's Fred Wilson's old body shop on Water Street.

ST: Anyway, we used to sell the boxes - 5 cents for a fairly good-sized box, and 15 cents for bigger ones. Mrs. Fabbi was such a nice little lady. They always gave you a donut or snail - one of those big, puffed up, glazed donuts. Boy, were they good. You'd go out and put the box right outside the door on the side. There were a lot of them piled up there. A lot of times we'd look back in, and if Mrs. Fabbi or whoever had bought the boxes had gone back in the bakery, we'd grab a couple of boxes and walk on down the street. Then later we'd pack them back up and sell the boxes again.

Jimmy Donahue and I would go around, and he knew every Irishman in town because he was Irish. We'd go around about every couple of months to these certain places that we knew where the guy would like his booze, and ask them if they had any empty whiskey bottles. We'd always get 3, 4, or 5 from this guy. Usually we'd do it if something like a carnival was going on in town. We went around to these old houses and got the bottles. You'd get 15 cents for quarts, 10 cents for a pint, and a nickel for a half pint. We'd get half a gunny sack full.

LT: Who would you sell them to?

ST: The bootleggers. Jimmy's sister was going with John Mitchell, who was a real high-class guy. But he was a bootlegger. We'd sell some of them to John. He had the reputation of making some of the best bootleg whiskey in Nevada. He had Manhattan and Round Mountain bars out there during Prohibition and he would provide them with whiskey. He had a big Hudson coupe - oh, it was a beautiful car. I think I was about 12 or 13, and John asked Jimmy to get a hold of me. He said, "John wants us to go out to Round Mountain and Manhattan tonight."

"Fine," I said. We'd go down to John's house, get in this Hudson and we'd drive out to Manhattan, park alongside a bar, and then go down and

have a sandwich. About half an hour later we'd go back up, get in the Hudson and go to Round Mountain and do the same damn thing. Just park it alongside a bar.

LT: Did you know what you were doing?

ST: Sure, we knew what we were doing. We were hauling bootleg whiskey; kegs of it. It didn't make any difference to us. We never saw any money, never saw any whiskey; never.

RM: Where did he keep the whiskey in the car?

ST: In the trunk; it had a big trunk. We made a lot of trips out there and he'd always give us \$5 apiece. Pretty good money for a couple of kids.

RM: You'd just drive it out there, and they'd come out and get it themselves while you were eating.

ST: If they ordered 2 kegs that's what they took. After a little wait, we'd drive on to the next place.

This Jimmy Donahue; what a character. There was an older guy who lived up on the hill just above him named Rudolph Krabbinhoff. In fact, his nephew is a court reporter in Carson City. Old Rudolph was a nice little guy. Kind of strange. He was retired, I guess. He never worked, but always had a little bit of money. He would buy pasties from Mrs. Truscott. He would always buy one for me and one for Jimmy. That was a very great event in my life - when I had one of Mrs. Truscott's pasties.

RM: Why don't you explain [again] what a pastie is?

ST: It's a Cornish dish. You take a piece of dough about the size of a dinner plate, and put in meat, potatoes, onions (they used to put suet in with the meat), salt, and pepper. I've made them a lot over the years. It took me quite a while to learn how. I just take a big handful of each,

except for the suet; I use butter. You fold them over and crimp the edges and bake them. If you've never had one, you've never eaten.

LT: We'll see that you get one, because he's working himself up to pasties right now. The miners took them cold for lunch down in the mines.

ST: Old Rudolph had an old Model T pickup and for some strange reason he wanted to go fishing. So once again, Jimmy Donahue and I volunteered our services. We were going to drive and take care of the old car in case he had a flat tire, and he was going to buy everything. So we loaded up a bunch of food the old guy bought, and we had our bedrolls, and we took off. First we went to Manhattan, and that's as far as we got the first day. The old man wanted to stay there. I think he must have gotten a room somewhere. There weren't motels, but he must have gotten a place. He bought us dinner in a restaurant - hot beef sandwiches again. We parked the Model T in the old Francisco Garage because it looked like it was going to rain. There was a fruit truck parked in there loaded down with grapes, mostly for the guys who were making wine. We had grapes all night.

The next day we took off and got to Round Mountain. The same thing happened in Round Mountain. The night we were in Manhattan it really rained up in Smoky Valley. We got there and the roads were pretty well washed out between Manhattan and Round Mountain. It was up in the foothills, in a series of little rolling ridges, and we had to be awfully careful. We finally got into Round Mountain and we stayed there overnight, but we had to sleep outside. I think old Rudolph got a room there, too, because he didn't sleep with us.

The next morning we took off and started down the road towards Darrough's Hot Springs, and we got out in the middle of the flat and there had been a terrible cloudburst that had washed across the road, and it had

washed the road out. There was a piece of culvert that was lying across the road that was supposed to carry the water off, but didn't. We weren't sure we could get over that, but Rudolph insisted that we try. The front wheels got over, but that was all. It was hot and we were working trying to get that darn thing up so we could get it moving. But we had nothing to work with - no rocks, no boards, no nothing. And the old man was about half drunk. He had a bottle with him and he'd have a few nips.

Jimmy and I talked about it and I said, "I'll walk up to Darrough's." I never realized how far it was going to be. Jimmy was going to stay with the old man because he had threatened to burn up the Model T. So I started to take off, and I thought, "No, I'm not going to do it." I walked down about a mile and there was a fence running alongside the road. So I went over and jerked a couple of cedar poles out of it, got the wire off, and packed them back to the Model T. By the time I got back down there, somebody had come down from Round Mountain trying to go up the valley, and they helped us pry the Model T back over the culvert so we could go back to Round Mountain.

We got into Round Mountain and stayed there again overnight, and the old man was still threatening to burn the Model T up, and we never did dare leave it. Then we got into Manhattan and he decided to go over to fish in one of the other creeks. We didn't know where we were going. We went over the summit, over Monitor Valley, up to Pine Creek first, and we stopped there. We were going to camp there overnight, we were sitting there having lunch and there were 10 million ants, and that made old Rudolph madder than a wet hen. So he said we'd go over to Barley Creek. We drove the truck down the road back over to Barley Creek, and the second crossing we went over, we got stuck. And once again he threatened to set fire to the

vehicle. I think John Nay owned Barley Creek ranch then, and one of us walked down to the ranch, only about half a mile. They came up with an old truck and pulled us out. We went back to Tonopah then. We never fished once. We were gone 7 or 8 days.

LT: You know what amazes me, Bob, when I listen to stories like this? These kids just came and went at will. Their mothers never worried about them.

ST: We had a lot of freedom.

LT: They would spend a week out in the hills, and their mom would just say, "Oh, you're home."

RM: Yes, that is interesting, isn't it? Were all the kids raised that way?

ST: Most of them. I remember one time I borrowed my dad's old Dodge truck. Tom Beko, myself, Billy Geyer, Lloyd Eason, Homer O'Connell, and Dick Ronzoni decided to go fishing. We made a gas stop down at the Standard Oil the night before and loaded up with odds and ends of food and went out to Barley Creek.

LT: How old were you all?

ST: Fourteen or 15. We drove out to Barley Creek, got up to the 3rd crossing, and pitched camp. And we stayed there till we were out of food. We had no idea when we were going back, we were catching fish. I didn't like fish especially, but I was hungry. We stayed until we ran completely out of food, and then we came home. I guess our parents were kind of surprised to see us. I don't know whether they were glad or not. This went on all the time. Allen Douglas, Billy Geyer, and Georgie Boscovich went out to Reese River fishing in one of Allen Douglas' old cars. They got out there to one of those ranches where the creek was and they camped

there. I don't think there was anyone at the ranch. They were out there 3 or 4 days, and they couldn't get the car going. They ran out of food. You ask Allen sometime about their trip to Reese River when all they had to eat was rhubarb. There were patches of it out there.

RM: Wild rhubarb at the ranch?

ST: Yes; no sugar. They ate that for a couple of days. I think it must have been a little rough on their bowels, too. I think old man Douglas finally went out and rescued them. They were long overdue, but no one ever got in a sweat over it. The mention of rhubarb, to this day, sends chills up Red's back. But it was very common to go out - everybody did it.

LT: In fact, you said you got up from the dinner table one day and left to go to the navy for 4 years. Probably never even said goodbye. Walked out the door and 4 years later he walked back in the door and sat down at the table and said "Hi." They weren't much on long goodbyes.

RM: Maybe kids grew up then with a sense of personal freedom and this carried over into their adult lives. This is what you see in the Nevada character - the real Nevada character. An independent, come-and-go-as-you-please type of person.

ST: Well, when I went down and joined the navy I told my folks I was going to go down and join up. I went down and came back, then when I got my papers to go in the service, I packed my suitcase and as I went out, I said, "I'll be seeing you." I got in my car and went down to San Pedro. I came home twice on leave, but we would never be very demonstrative, ever. We more or less shifted for ourselves from the time we were little kids.

LT: That's it.

RM: Was that pretty typical?

ST: Absolutely. Everybody was scrounging for something, for a job or to

make a dollar. It bred a lot of self-confidence and a lot of independence.

LT: And don't forget ingenuity. Actually, it's made him a pretty good judge, because he did it all himself when he was younger.

ST: Yes, I should have been sent to reform school quite a few times. Nowadays, they would have.

RM: Do you think so?

ST: Oh, yes. A whole slew of us; a lot of us. We weren't vicious or mean, but we weren't completely honest, either.

RM: That's the way we were, too.

ST: If you had a chance to pick up something that would make you a buck, and no one would miss it, you'd take it. We didn't break into houses, stores . . .

LT: You didn't finish your story about going into the bakery with those boxes. You'd pile them up in a wagon or something.

ST: That was at the Mercantile store. Another good friend of mine, one who should have gone to reform school, too, was a kid named Leonard Burns. He had a brother, himself and his mother, who was a widow. We'd go shopping for the old lady once a week down at the United Mercantile Company, which was just about where the vacant lot is between the Corner Store and the Hock Shop. We had a little wagon and we'd go in and try to get a box to sit in the wagon that would be just the height of the counter. We'd pull up alongside the counter, and the people who worked in the store, Art Neilsen and Joe Bird, knew Mrs. Burns, and she had credit there. So we'd give Art, who usually was the clerk I guess, this list and he'd start picking up stuff. We'd always pull this box where they had quite a display of cakes and jelly rolls and cookies. The box was never higher than the counter; always just a little lower. He'd bring the stuff over and we'd

put it in the box. He'd turn his back and we'd slide a cake in the box too. Then Joe would give you a piece of cheese or something. Art would come back with more stuff for the box, and we'd flip a jelly roll in, too. We'd get 2 or 3 different cakes.

On the way home, we would stop right behind the Silver Queen Motel, where there was a big ore bin. We'd take out a cake or whatever it was and go up in the ore bin and eat it before we'd go up to his house, which was just around the corner. And we'd hide the other ones in the wood shed. She never went out there so we always had plenty of sweet stuff. Talk about conniving kids! It was quite a challenge. They were good cakes. We stole an applesauce cake one time, and it was years before I could ever eat applesauce cake again.

LT: The cake made you sick?

ST: Oh, yes. It was too rich and too heavy.

A family had a cabin out at Willow Creek, up by Belmont. I won't mention their names, but they called him Stud Horse Louie. He had 4 or 5 boys and a couple of girls. He was real rough and dumb; not very educated. He had a mare - maybe he was hauling wood or fence posts or something. He had a little garden alongside the house. He took this old mare and had her bred and she was getting pretty large with the colt she was carrying, damn near due to have it. They were sitting around the table one evening, all these little tow-headed kids, and they were all arguing about who was going to have the colt. Stud Horse didn't pay any attention to them. Two of the kids got to arguing about who was going to ride the colt and they got into a hell of a row over it. Finally old Louie had had enough. He knocked one of the kids right off his chair, and he said, "You keep your goddamn ass off that colt!" The colt hadn't even been born yet.

When I was working down at the paper office there was a linotype operator. This operator would get drunk - oh, Lord. This is a fact; we'd tie him to his chair. He had a swivel chair that he sat in for the linotype so he could turn around, put lead in the pot and stuff like that, without getting up. We'd tie him to that chair and he could still set the linotype up. We had to keep the pot full and every time the tray got full of slugs, we'd change it. And he could still set type well.

We were always playing tricks on everybody, and a young guy who didn't work there except to sell newspapers came in. His name was Windy Holt - Lionel Holt, I think. He wasn't a troublemaker, but he liked to play tricks. One day one of his friends went down in the basement where the press was, down a flight of stairs to a landing, then down another flight over . . . the press sat under the main floor. We saw this guy go down with a form full of type. Windy ran over to the sink and got a pitcher of water, and he was standing there at the head of the stairs looking right down at the landing, and he could hear these footsteps. Without even thinking, he just saw a body and he dumped this whole gallon of water on the linotype operator. He was sober that day and he came roaring up those stairs like a freight train and Windy ran out that back door on a dead run. He chased him halfway down the street. I don't think Holt came back down there for a couple of months, or the operator would have killed him. Gee, he was mad.

LT: I want you to tell about the magazine rack.

ST: At Polins? There was a drug store called Polins where the Jim Butler Motel is now. They had newspapers, gifts, and cigars. Gerald Roberts had it in later years. Out in front there was a kind of an alcove built between the 2 doors, and between the doors there was a magazine rack on

both sides. He had all the latest issues of magazines on it. Well, there must have been 7 dogs in town for every family, at least. They'd wander up and down Main Street. Worse than now; way worse. Every time a dog came by, he'd sniff and raise up his leg and wet on those magazines. Harry Polin was quite a little guy. His mother-in-law was a holy terror.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

ST: They had wooden slats to keep the magazines from falling out. So somebody gave Harry this idea or he thought of it himself - of running 2 wires along these wooden slats and into the building. They were plugged into a light socket. Unless you leaned against it or something, you wouldn't even know they were there. Lloyd and I were walking by there one day, and we always liked to stop and read the stories. There was nothing to do, so we were standing there talking, trying to figure out some way to raise some money for a Green River or root beer or something. A woman came along with a dog. She stopped and looked at the magazines and the dog walked over to the other side and he raised up his leg and wet on those magazines. Well, he went down the street, ki-yi-ing at the top of his lungs, with the leg still in the air. This woman was absolutely livid because she thought one of us had kicked her dog. We tried to explain to her what had happened and she wouldn't believe us. Her dog never stopped for a mile. Well, you know, if you were going to buy a newspaper, you wouldn't want to buy one with dog pee on it. Harry broke the dogs of that pretty quickly.

Getting back to the family that tore the house down for firewood . . .

This was a widow and she had 4 or 5 boys. One of the oldest boys - I'll call him Chester - was an electrician and he was also a drunk. He would work around the mines and mills as an electrician - I think they were making about \$5 a day. When the mines closed down they really fell upon hard times. He was more or less the sole support of his family; the other boys were in school. The second boy had gotten married and had his own family. So he had to odd-job around. He'd work wherever he had a chance to do some electrical work.

One day he was supposed to have gotten paid from a job he had done, and 6:00 came and he hadn't come home yet. It was in the middle of winter; bitterly cold, with snow about 2 feet deep on the ground. This lady sent the next-oldest boy downtown to all the joints looking for Chester. He couldn't find him. The kid went up and down the street, thinking Chester was either ahead of him or behind him. He finally gave up and was going to go home. He was trudging up the hill and stumbled over something and fell down. There was old Chester.

RM: Was Chester alive in the snow?

ST: Passed out cold, and about 6 inches of snow on him. The brother roused him up somehow and trugged up the hill. This poor woman was always in debt up to her eyeballs. She worked around as help to other women, housework and that; whatever she could do. She had to work like a slave, trying to keep bread on the table. She'd send the kids down to the United Cattle Company store, right there where the A Bar L is now. That was a grocery store and meat market.

RM: O.K. Reed had a store here?

ST: It was an offshoot of O.K. Reed's operation. The man who was managing it was named Nesbit. That's where this lady traded. She traded every

place she could get credit.

LT: Was it meat, or everything?

ST: Groceries on one side and meat on the other. It wasn't a large grocery store, like the one down the street, but there were about a dozen small ones. Mrs. Feutch had one. Dave Coleman had one.

RM: Was there a Safeway store?

ST: No, this was long before Safeway. She'd send one of the boys down to get some groceries. If she hadn't paid some money on the bill, they wouldn't give her any more credit. So she'd send down the next kid, the next oldest boy. He was a little bit more presentable than the littlest one. She'd go through all the boys this way and one after another, no credit. Finally she'd go down, and she give them some kind of story and she'd come home with some groceries. And you could kind of sympathize with the grocery store. Times were tough; maybe they had a hard time paying their wholesalers.

RM: There was no welfare or anything.

ST: Welfare was your own 2 hands and strong back. But I used to feel so sorry for her with those little kids. I'd go down with the youngest one. Nesbit would come out there and say, "No, no credit." Pretty soon, Mama would go down and she usually would get it. There were so many widows around town.

RM: From the silicosis?

ST: Most of them were killed in the mines, yes. The ones that worked in them very long didn't last. From '29 to about '36 or '37 it was pretty tough. The leasers were making a little bit of money, but not very much. Fifty or 60 leasers can't support a whole town. At the start of the Depression the town had 2 newspapers, then it only had one. The number of

grocery stores got smaller; the bars didn't. They always managed to have business in the bars. The number of restaurants decreased rapidly. The Montana Cafe, the Mammoth Cafe, down there where the L&L Motel is . . .

RM: Wasn't that where the red-light district was?

ST: Well, there was a bar there. Everybody was shutting down. And everyone that shut down put that many more people out of work. I often wonder how those widows ever survived; I really do. The going wage for a 6-day week was \$24, if you could find a week's work. Luckily, some of the leasers did real well, and they hired people.

Then there were trucks hauling the ore out of town, going to McGill instead of on the railroad. You couldn't buy a job.

RM: Why were they going to McGill rather than on the railroad?

ST: Small shipments. You had to have 40 tons to ship on the train. Dave Roberts would haul it over. There were 2 or 3 guys who would haul ore. You'd get a check in a couple of weeks and they were glad to buy the ore because of the silica in it. They talk about the panic of Black Monday [October 19, 1987] a couple of weeks ago . . .

RM: That was nothing compared to back then.

LT: What would you do if you were a woman with 4 children? Would you depend on the kindness of your neighbors to help, or what?

ST: Maybe they would have a relative who would send them \$10 once in awhile. There were so many widows, and they all had more than one child. Almost every kid I went to school with, their mother was a widow. Nowadays, they are not widows, but divorcees.

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